

The New Order: Improving the Internationality in the International Business Degree Programme

Case Savonia University of Applied Sciences

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Internationalization of higher education institutions in Finland is valuable for the institution itself and the surrounding society. The objective of the research was to discover how internationality could be improved in the International Business degree programme of Savonia University of Applied Sciences and made more efficient in order to benefit from the advantages internationality offers. The reason for the topic selection was that according to several sources, international functions within the programme are shattered and a general guideline for internationality is missing. The project was assigned by Virpi Oksanen, the International Coordinator of the Business Administration degree programme.</p> <p>The study aimed to state what is internationality at Savonia UAS and to find means to improve it. Benchmarking other universities of applied sciences was used as a method to discover the successful factors behind the internationality of a higher education institution. The benchmarked institutions were Turku University of Applied Sciences, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences. The research was conducted through a qualitative research method which included interviewing members of Savonia UAS and the members of other institutions. Altogether there were eleven interviews.</p> <p>The results revealed the issues behind the international functions within the International Business programme of Savonia UAS and how the issues could be resolved by adapting practices and policies of the benchmark institutions. Through the findings, it became possible to suggest improvements regarding internationality and international functions within the International Business degree programme. The study succeeded in finding solutions to the ultimate research question, but it is the decision of Savonia University of Applied Sciences whether these changes are executed within the institution.</p>			
<p>Keywords</p> <p>Internationality, international business, organizations, education, international studies, benchmarking, tutoring</p>			

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	6
2	ORGANIZATIONAL SOLUTIONS	9
2.1	Concept of organization	9
2.2	Organizational structures	10
2.2.1	Functional structure	11
2.2.2	Multidivisional structure.....	12
2.2.3	Matrix structure.....	13
2.2.4	Product-team structure	14
2.2.5	Geographic structure.....	16
2.3	Higher education institutions as organizations in Finland.....	17
3	INTERNATIONALITY IN UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES	20
3.1	Universities of applied sciences in Finland.....	20
3.2	About Finnish and foreign applicants.....	21
3.3	Strategy for the internationalization of higher education institutions	21
3.4	Features of UAS internationality.....	23
4	RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONALIZATION OF FINNISH UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES	27
4.1	Research goals and questions	27
4.2	Research methodology	28
4.3	Interviews as data collection method	28
4.4	Interview design	29
4.5	Data analysis	31
4.6	Benchmarking	31
4.7	Benchmarking participant institutions.....	33
4.8	Internationality in Savonia UAS.....	34
4.9	Student unions and associations relating to internationality in Savonia UAS..	38
4.10	Savonia UAS organizational structure	41
4.11	Organizational structure of international functions.....	42
5	FINDINGS	46
5.1	Savonia UAS findings.....	46
5.2	Benchmarking findings.....	54
6	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	60
6.1	Summary.....	60
6.2	Suggestions for improvement.....	63
6.3	Limitations.....	66

6.4 Conclusion	67
REFERENCES	70

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Interview 1
- Appendix 2 Interview 2
- Appendix 3 Interview 3
- Appendix 4 Interview 4
- Appendix 5 Interview 5
- Appendix 6 Interview 6

1 INTRODUCTION

“A change is like a space rocket. It will consume a massive amount of energy to pierce the atmosphere. Afterwards there is nothing holding it back” (Niva&Tuominen 2005, 3).

Changes in internationality's operational environment and the increasing multiculturalism within the society create new expectations for higher education institutions in Finland. As the attractiveness of Finland's business environment needs to be strengthened, internationalization of higher education institutions is crucial: internationalization advances the diversification, international networking and competence of the surrounding society, and increases the wellbeing, expertise and civilization of the citizens. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2009). The topic of this research was discovered with the help of Virpi Oksanen, the International Coordinator in the Business Administration degree programme of Savonia University of Applied Sciences, later referred to as Savonia UAS. Oksanen felt that internationality and international functions within the International Business degree programme could be improved since the operating model for internationality seemed shattered and inefficient to Oksanen.

The views of Oksanen strengthened the opinion of the author, who had also noticed similar issues in internationality. The author, having studied International Business for three years and worked as an international tutor and the International Affairs Correspondent of Kuopion Tradenomiopiskelijat ry for two years, felt that Savonia University of Applied Sciences would benefit from a research which would seize the issues that complicate internationality in the International Business degree programme. The author also had a profound interest in internationality and wanted to perform a research for the school to improve the international environment. The author felt that internationality is an important asset in education. Oksanen and the author agreed that the research would focus solely on the situation in International Business in order to construct a definite analysis. The research would concentrate on one degree programme instead of all degree programmes of Savonia UAS. Nevertheless, the author feels that the research could assist the other degree programmes as well, since internationality and its functions are a part of the whole organization.

Oksanen suggested that benchmarking could be an effective method to resolve the issues in international functions within the International Business degree programme. Benchmarking is a method which is used when an organization wants to compare their performance with others and identify and adopt practices that would improve their performance. Benchmarking can be exercised in any area where performance is wanted

to be compared to learn from others and to adapt ideas, methods or practices (Stapenhurst (2009, 3-6). The idea was to choose up to five universities of applied sciences in Finland and research how internationality is executed in their organizations, in order to discover how internationality in Savonia UAS could be improved based on the findings.

The objective of the thesis is to discover how to improve internationality in the International Business degree programme by explaining the current situation of international functions in Savonia UAS and then researching through benchmarking how is internationality executed in those universities of applied sciences that have succeeded in international matters. The benchmarked institutions are Turku University of Applied Sciences, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences. The institutions were suggested by Oksanen. Research questions are as follows:

- How is internationality organized and implemented in Savonia UAS?
- How is internationality organized and implemented in those universities of applied sciences who have the most well-functioning internationality?
- How could internationality in the International Business degree programme of Savonia UAS be improved?

The publications of Ministry of Education and Culture, Finnish National Board of Education and CIMO Centre for International Mobility provide valuable information of internationality in higher education institutions in Finland. Additionally, to understand how internationality is organized, organizational theories by Charles W.L. Hill and Gareth R. Jones (2001) are introduced, including the views of Philip Kotler (2009). Theories by Kari Kuoppala (2014) are presented to explain how higher education institutions in Finland function as organizations. Besides the theoretical data, interviews were a crucial part of this research. The author interviewed five members of Savonia UAS and six members of the benchmark institutions. The interviews with the members of other institutions were conducted through phone calls and Skype.

The interviewees from Savonia UAS were Juha Asikainen, the Executive Director of Student Union SAVOTTA; Marina Malinen, the International Relations Coordinator; Petteri Alanko, the Communications Manager; Pirjo Venhovaara, the Student Counselling Coordinator and Niko Kosunen, a fourth-year International Business student and an international tutor. The interviewees from other institutions were Markus Virtanen, the International Affairs Correspondent of the student union TUO of Turku University of Applied Sciences; Kaisa Nauska, the International Business Correspondent of the

business student association Trombi ry of Metropolia University of Applied Sciences; Linda Holma, the International Tutoring Correspondent of the student union JAMKO of Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences; Anu Härkönen, the Head of International Affairs of Turku UAS; Arja Hannukainen, the Head of International Relations of Metropolia UAS and Nina Björn, the International Relations Manager of Jyväskylä UAS.

As Savonia UAS in an educational organization, the thesis starts with a chapter of organizational theory in order to understand the differences between organizational models. Then, theory of higher education institutions as organizations in Finland is presented. The third chapter addresses internationality and its dimensions in universities of applied sciences. The fourth chapter presents the main research part of the thesis, explaining the whole process of the research. The chapter includes the descriptions of the research goals and questions, research methodology, interviews and the benchmarking process, followed by assessments of the organizational structure of Savonia UAS and organizational structures of international functions both in Savonia UAS and the benchmarked institutions. In the fifth chapter the research findings are presented, followed by a chapter dedicated for discussing the findings. The thesis is completed with the conclusion.

2 ORGANIZATIONAL SOLUTIONS

To begin to form a profound general view of the improvements that are needed to establish efficient and well-planned internationality in Savonia UAS, the organization's structure must be assessed to comprehend how a university of applied science functions. According to Stewart R. Clegg, Martin Kornberg and Tyrone Pitsis (2016) the word "organization" derives from the Greek word *organum*. The ancient etymological meaning of the word was a *wind instrument*, but since approximately 1000 AD *organum* began to stand for a mechanical device, an instrument. It closely relates to the Greek word *órganon*, a tool, bodily organ or an implement, and also connects to the word *érgon*, meaning work. In the late 14th century the meaning of the word organization stabilized – a tool designed for a particular purpose. (Clegg, Kornberg & Pitsis 2016, 21).

2.1 Concept of organization

All organizations vary in what they do: the goal of the police is to regulate and the goal of a school is to educate. Every organization has a purpose and its own objectives and goals. An organization consists of the following characteristics: organization's design defines the organization itself and its actions. The design is manifested through the organization's structure and its routine practices. Changes are a part of an organization; the time does not stand still. Through experience an organization will alter its practices, since future is the keyword: the members of an organization will strive to accomplish a planned and desired future. The desirable future is often indicated through the organization's goals or performance indicators. Hierarchy is utilized. Division of work is used to create roles which are separate but related. Hierarchy means an organized distribution of powers over command and control, which is approved by those being managed. Actions and roles define the responsibilities needed. The responsibilities are altered with the help of experience as the future actions actualize. When the future actions are realized, programs of change management or organization reform review the organization's roles, actions and responsibilities. (Clegg et al. 2016, 22-23).

According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2012) organizations are built on rules, since rules provide for rationality and protect the organization members. Strategic planning occurs within the context of the organization. A company's organization exists within the framework of rules, policies, structures and corporate culture, which can all become dysfunctional when the business environment changes rapidly. Managers can change policies and structures, but changing corporate culture is extremely difficult. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 67).

Corporate culture stands for “the shared experiences, stories, beliefs and norms that characterize the organization”. For example, the way people dress and talk within the organization acts as a demonstrative factor of the corporate culture. It has been noted that a new strategy can be implemented successfully by adapting it to the existing corporate culture. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 67). Social psychologist Geert Hofstede describes corporate culture as “a shared, mental software” (2010, 47). According to Clegg et al. (2016) the most popular definition of organizational culture is offered by Schein (1997). The theory demonstrates three different levels of culture to analyze the various components of the whole organizational culture. (Clegg et al. 2016, 208).

The first level consists of visible organizational features, such as **the structure of buildings, interior design and uniforms**. These features are easily recognizable but do not expose everything about the organizational culture. The second level consists of **exposed values** which are non-visible but still surround the beliefs and norms that are expressed by employees when they discuss the organization’s issues. The most important and profound culture, the *basic assumptions* can be found in the third level. It consists of organization members’ **basic assumptions**, beliefs and norms, which lead their behavior without being specifically expressed. The third level is the most influential, since it works secretly and molds the organization’s decision-making process. (Clegg et al. 2016, 208-209).

2.2 Organizational structures

To create the most value, a company should organize its activities by implementing a strategy. Strategy is achieved through organizational design, which means deciding the combination of control systems and organizational structure that enable a company to pursue their strategy most effectively. An organizational design should “create and sustain a competitive advantage”. According to Hill and Jones (2001) organizational structure has two significances: coordination of the activities of employees so that they collaborate most productively to implement a strategy that enhances competitive advantage, and motivating employees and providing them incentives to accomplish remarkable efficiency, innovation, quality or customer responsiveness. (Hill & Jones 2001, 383).

Organizational structure and control define how people behave: they determine how people will function within the organizational setting. A successful organizational design advances its ability to add value and achieve a competitive advantage. Strategic managers use various organizational structures to motivate and coordinate employees.

After a company's strategy is formulated, designing the organizational structure should be the next priority, since the strategy is realized through the structure. Its role is to provide tools for the managers to coordinate the activities of the many functions or divisions within the organization, to fully access the skills and capabilities. (Hill & Jones 2001, 383-384).

In the following section the organization models according to Charles W.L. Hill and Gareth R. Jones (2001) are introduced, also including the views of Philip Kotler (2009). The aim is to examine the models' characteristics, differences, advantages and disadvantages. The examples included are functional structure, multidivisional structure, matrix structure, product-team structure and geographic structure.

2.2.1 Functional structure

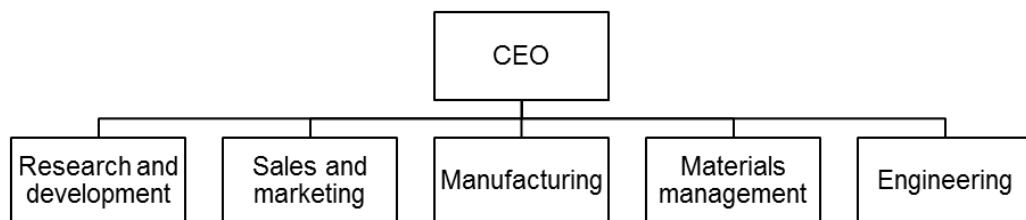


FIGURE 1. Functional organization structure (Hill & Jones 2001)

In functional organization the members are grouped together based on their expertise and experience, or because they utilize the same resources. When people who perform similar tasks are grouped together, they will eventually learn from one another and become more productive and specialized. They will also supervise each other to ensure an effective manner of working and that everyone tends to their responsibilities. Another benefit of a functional structure is that managers are given a greater control over organizational activities. (Hill & Jones 2001, 394-395). According to Kotler (2009, 774) the main advantage of a functional organization is the administrative simplicity.

Difficulties may occur if the number of levels in the hierarchy of a functional organization increases. The importance stands in creating distinctive groups within the organization, with their own managers and hierarchies. Managing the organization becomes clearer when the separate groups are managed independently and they specialize in their own tasks. (Hill & Jones 2001, 394-395). Kotler also agrees that if the number of products and markets increases, the form of the functional organization can lose its effectiveness (2009, 774).

2.2.2 Multidivisional structure

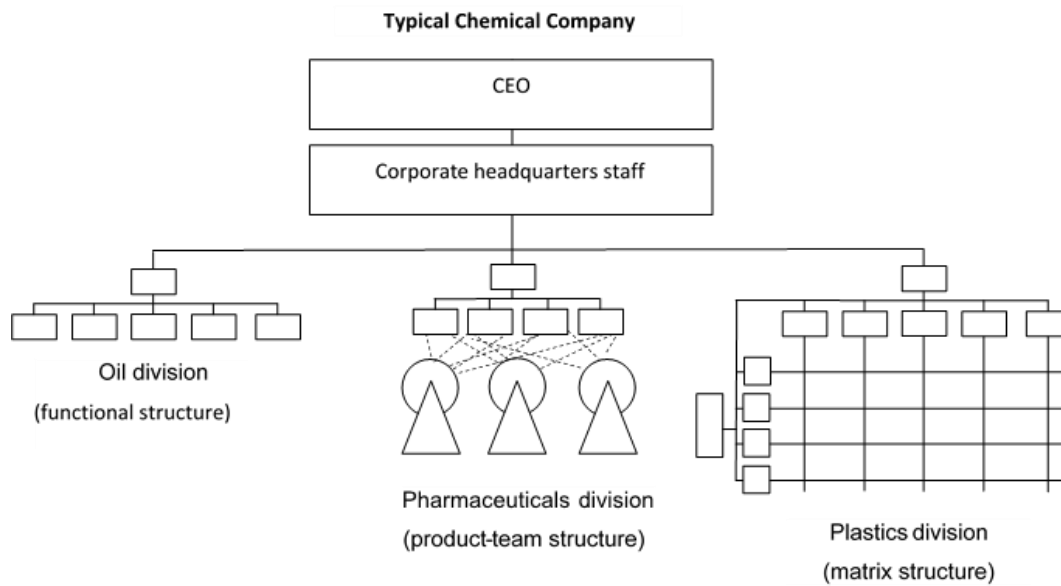


FIGURE 2. Multidivisional structure (Hill & Jones 2001)

In multidivisional structure each business unit is located in its own self-contained division or unit, along all support functions. For instance, PepsiCo has two main divisions, soft drinks and snack food. Each of them have their own functions, for example research and development and marketing. The office of corporate headquarters staff monitors the activities and practices financial control over the divisions. Corporate managers supervise the actions of functional and divisional managers and they constitute as an additional level in the organization's hierarchy. (Hill & Jones 2001, 397). According to Kotler (2009, 86), each business unit develops its own strategic plan to ensure a profitable future. Within the unit, each product level, such as a product line or brand, establishes a marketing plan for accomplishing its objectives in its own market.

In the figure above the structure of a typical chemical company is presented. Although there could be dozens of divisions within the company, only three are shown here. Each division obtains a full range of support services. Each division has their own sales, personnel and accounting departments. Each division acts as a profit center, which helps the corporate headquarters staff to monitor and evaluate the activities. Operating a multidivisional structure causes much higher bureaucratic costs than operating a functional structure, since the size of the corporate staff is a considerable expense. There can be thousands of corporate managers in the corporate staff of a large company. But if high bureaucratic costs are balanced by a high level of value creation, moving to a complex structure is sensible. (Hill & Jones 2001, 397-398).

Enhanced corporate **financial control** is an advantage of a multidivisional structure, because each division within the structure is its own profit center. Corporate headquarters can efficiently allocate resources among the divisions (Hill & Jones 2001, 398). Hill and Jones (2001, 398) state that “the visibility of divisional performance means that corporate headquarters can identify the divisions in which investment of funds will yield the greatest long-term returns”. Additionally, the multidivisional structure enhances **strategic control** within the organization: the corporate staff is free from operating responsibilities; thus the staff has more time to focus on strategic issues and to develop answers to environmental changes. (Hill & Jones 2001, 399).

The multidivisional structure allows the company to **grow** without any organizational limits. When the information overload at the center is diminished, corporate managers are able to handle a larger amount of businesses: new opportunities can be considered to advance the growth. When the same array of standardized accounting and financial control is used for all divisions, there will be less communication problems. Within a multidivisional structure there is also a **stronger pursuit of internal efficiency**. The efficiency of each division can be assessed independently by observing the profit it generates and the divisional managers are responsible for their performance. Inefficiencies are thus easily recognized by the corporate office. (Hill & Jones 2001, 399).

2.2.3 Matrix structure

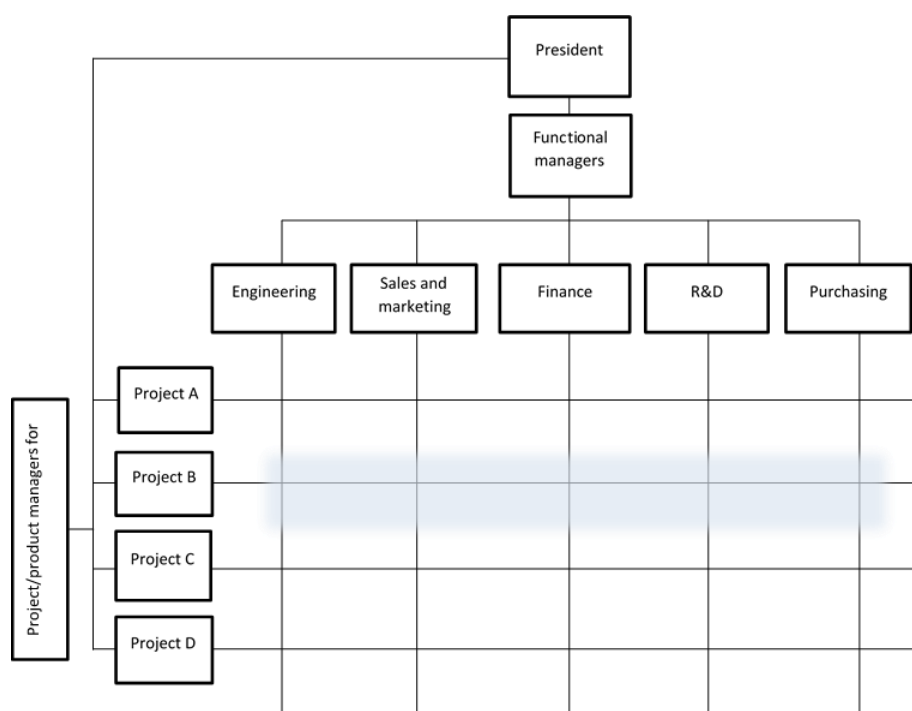


FIGURE 3. Matrix structure (Hill & Jones 2001)

Kotler says that companies that generate several products for several markets should exercise the matrix structure (2009, 777). According to Hill and Jones, the matrix structure has a few hierarchical levels. The employees have two bosses: the **functional boss** who is the head of a function and the **project boss** who manages the individual projects. With the help of specialists from other functions, employees work on project teams and report to the project boss on project-related matters. The functional boss takes care of matters related to functional issues. The matrix structure provides flexible and autonomous working conditions and usually the employees within the structure are highly qualified and professional. The matrix structure was developed by high-technology industries such as electronics and aerospace, because an efficient structure was needed for companies that had a rapid speed of product development in competitive and uncertain environment. (2001, 402).

The disadvantages of the matrix structures are mostly financial (Hill & Jones 2001, 403). This is also mentioned by Kotler, who says that the downside of matrix structure is its costliness (2009, 778). First, the bureaucratic costs for operating the matrix are high, when compared for example to the functional structure. The employees are highly skilled and educated, thus salaries and overhead are high as well. Second, the consistent movement of employees around the matrix creates a need for both time and money to be spent in order to establish new team relationships and getting the projects started. Third, it is difficult to manage the two-boss employee's role. Avoiding conflict over resources between functions and projects must be ensured. Power struggles might occur if project and function are left uncontrolled, which will lead to inactivity and decline, rather than increase flexibility. (Hill & Jones 2001, 403-404).

In their publication "Matrix Organizations: Design for Collaboration and Agility" (2009, 2) Nick Horney and Tom O'Shea state that there are two desired outcomes that occur within a matrix structure. First, there is a concurrent focus on multiple perspectives, since a matrix structure makes a person or unit active in more than one group. Second, the technical and specialized resources are used more effectively. In every organization, there are specialists who are needed by various units. It is usually too expensive to duplicate the experts across the organization, so the matrix structure allows sharing the experts without having them be confined in just one unit.

2.2.4 Product-team structure

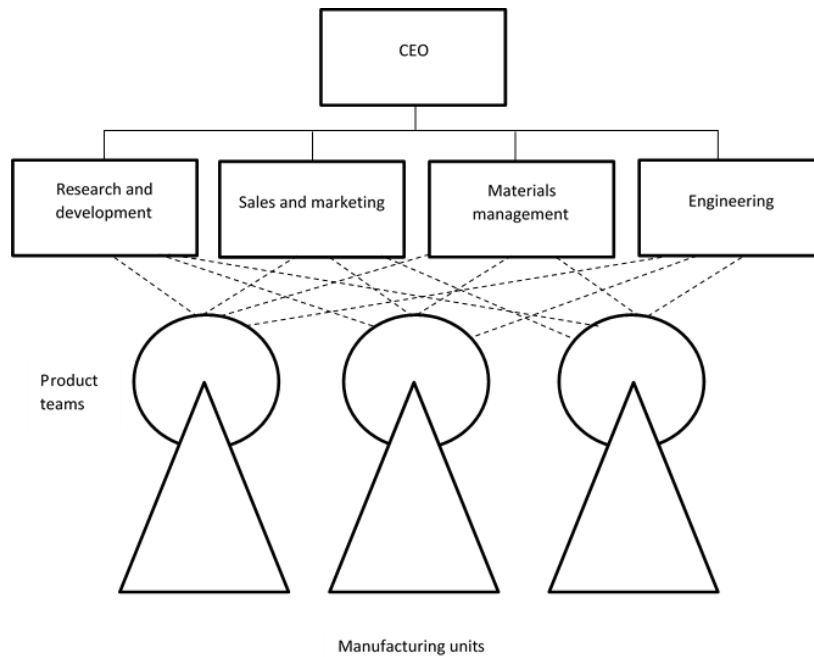


FIGURE 4. Product-Team Structure (Hill & Jones 2001)

The product-team structure has similar advantages to the matrix structure, but it is easier and less expensive to operate: the employees are arranged into permanent cross-functional teams, as illustrated in Figure 1.4. above. The tasks are distributed along product or project lines to decrease bureaucratic costs and to expand management's ability to control and monitor the manufacturing process. Unlike in the matrix structure where employees are temporarily assigned to different projects, functional specialists are placed permanently in cross-functional teams. The teams are assembled at the beginning of the product-development process, thus problems that occur are easily solved before they cause significant redesign issues. (Hill & Jones 2001, 404-405). Kotler (2009, 775) says that it is important to understand that the term "product" in this context should be understood as any customer-perceived market offering. Kotler continues that this organizational mode does not replace the functional organization model, but instead aids as another layer of management.

Another structure that closely relates to product-team structure, is the team structure. A team is a self-determining workgroup, which consists of people who are responsible for collaborating on a certain area or task. A team is group of people, who have been organized as a relatively permanent group to execute a task and to reach agreed goal and objectives through collaboration. There are no characteristics to describe a "normal" team, since teams need to be built by taking the organization's structure, field, tasks and needs into account. Teams and the areas of responsibility can be of different sizes and one person can be a member of several teams. Working in a team requires learning new

skills and competences and often scrutinizing one's own values and attitudes. Successful teamwork demands education and training. The group needs to understand what a team is, why are they built and what are the objectives from the viewpoints of the organization and the individual. Working in a team fulfils several basic human needs, such as social needs, needs for security, needs for being appreciated and the need for self-expression. The "I am just working here" attitude generates when these needs are not fulfilled. (Spiik 2014, 31-33).

2.2.5 Geographic structure

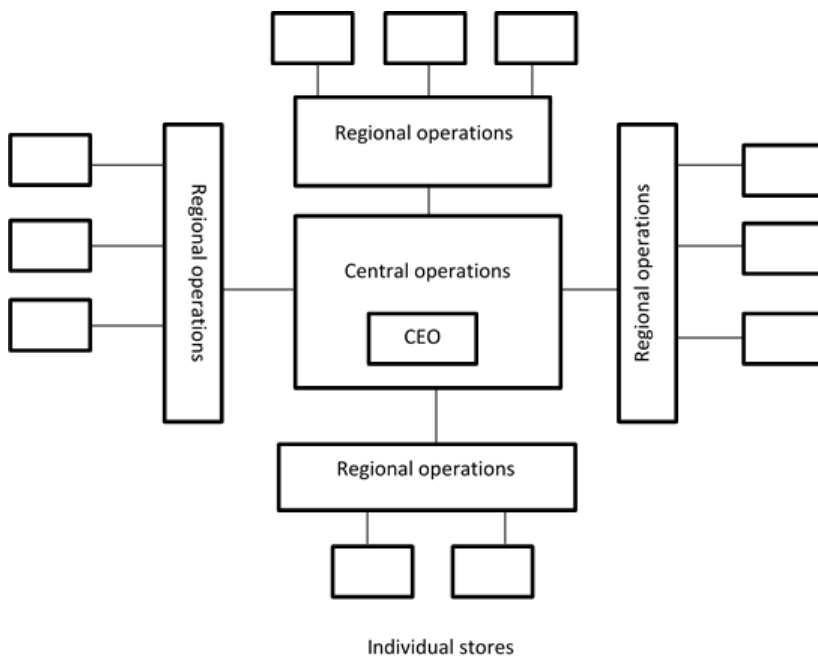


FIGURE 5. Geographic structure (Hill & Jones 2001)

In geographic structure the geographic regions form the basis for the grouping of organization's activities. A company could for example distribute its manufacturing operations and set up manufacturing plants in the country's different regions. Hence, the organization can respond to the needs of regional customers and diminish transportation costs. Service organizations such as banks and store chains are able to organize their marketing and sales activities on a regional level rather than national, in order to get closer to the customers. There are several regional hierarchies in the geographic structure. They perform the work previously carried out by a single centralized hierarchy. Companies that use the geographic structure are for example FedEx and Wal-Mart. (Hill & Jones 2001, 406). Kotler (2009,774) says that if a company seeks to market itself competently, it is vital to utilize market area specialists. The specialists would advise the headquarters of the alterations in the marketing mix that are needed across countries and regions.

2.3 Higher education institutions as organizations in Finland

Higher education in Finland began to grow rapidly in the 1960's, which increased the number and the size of higher education institutions. Since the millennium this trend has subsided, when the number of the institutions has been decreased and the number of students has come under scrutiny. In both sectors of universities and universities of applied sciences the aim has recently been to create larger concepts and additionally to develop the division of labour within the institutions. (Virtanen 2014, 291). There are various kinds of higher education organizations, for example the Finnish university organizations differ greatly from the UAS organizations. The size of the institution is a significant factor - the educational institution becomes more multidimensional when the size is larger. The location is a notable factor as well. Some higher education institutions have several locations around the area, which brings its own characteristics into the organizational structure. (Kuoppala 2014, 245).

Higher education institutions as organizations are based on information. Information is their source of life. Information is the raw material of labour conducted in higher education institutions – and also the product. The diversity of information causes looseness in the organization structure, since different functions have been divided into several simultaneously functioning organizations within the institution. In the traditional higher education institution, these parallel organizations correlate to university's faculties and their units of area. (Kuoppala 2014, 263).

Virtanen (2014) says that managing a higher education institution correlates closely with the *owners* of the organization. The ownership of a higher education institution depends on its juridical relationship with the government, municipalities, limited companies or foundations. The juridical administrative autonomy of Finnish higher education institutions and the freedom of education and research set their limits to the managing of the institution. The resources generate mainly from the public sector, and one of the main objectives for the institutions is to benefit the society and humanity. Thus, managing a higher education institution is public management. (2014, 315).

None of the traditional organization theories can fully describe all the dimensions of a higher education organization (Peterson 2007). In the multi-layered structure of higher education organizations, the boundaries of different units have become blurred. Values, objectives, information, leadership, traditions and academic work policy connect the units to each other. Higher education organizations have often been described with several organization models because of the multi-layered structure. (Kuoppala 2014, 263).

The organization structure on higher education institutions can be described through these main characteristics: the organization consists of parallel, independent units or programs that have been formed according to their expertise. The highest management belongs to a collective governmental body constituting of unit or program representatives. There are no specific common outcome targets but the specific characteristics of programs or units have become more emphasized in knowledge-based organizations. Separate administrative units working alongside the basic units are responsible for the maintenance of units and programs. Traditions and principles of occupational operations within the community (such as basing the education on research or work-based education) have a central significance in the operations coordination of the organization. (Kuoppala 2014, 274).

Academic organizations are parallel to a craftsmanship or a guild system rather than a bureaucratic institution. It is thus understandable that power relations are based on branch of science, not on university units. The practitioners of the same branch of science form a horizontal, national scientific community, which is connected to a similarly organized international branch of science. The power relations are based on expertise and academic freedom. (Kuoppala 2014, 274). In Finland the autonomy and independence in decision-making of universities of applied sciences is ensured by the Universities of applied sciences Act (Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture 2016). Universities are open and loosely bound organizations. The openness is a result of a diverse and continuous interaction with the environment. Being loosely bound describes the structure of the university organization, where segments of the whole organization function as individual organizations. Practically being loosely bound is manifested through the scarce collaboration between the different branches of science. (Kuoppala 2014, 276).

The **matrix structure** of universities has developed spontaneously. In matrix structure the highest management and central government form the administrative element of the organization. The bureaucratic foundation of the highest management is in a continuous conflict with the values and attitudes of the practitioners of science. The larger the university grows, the larger becomes the distance between the administrative personnel of the central government and the practitioners of science. The connection to the national central government, Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, actualizes through the central government in universities. (Kuoppala 2014, 276-277).

The central government's mission is contradictory: it must offer the conditions for academic work, and also be responsible for the actualization of profit responsibility for the

Ministry of Education and Culture and other investors. (Kuoppala 2014, 277). In addition, international management has become a part of the organizational structure in higher education institutions, as the institutions' activity exponentially exceeds the borders of countries and cultures. Previously international matters were organized as separate tasks or even units, but as internationality increases, international management has become essential within the organizations. (Virtanen, 2014, 318).

3 INTERNATIONALITY IN UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES

During recent decades internationality in education has grown exponentially due to globalization. It is not determined whether the increase in internationalization of higher education is the cause or the result of globalization, but growth and progress in technology, knowledge, goods, capital and stream of ideas have their part in the growth in educational internationalization. Due to this factor, the interdependence and interconnectivity between countries has increased. Higher education has an important role in providing people a stream of knowledge, attributing to economy and changing the landscape of international interaction. (Knight 2014, 83).

Globalization and its benefits, disadvantages and consequences have been a part of popular and scholarly discourse for many years. Although globalization is nowadays regarded as a norm, the discussion is now moving into the analyzation of how countries, regions, communities and sectors could arbitrate the realities of globalization in order to maximize possible benefits and reduce possible risks. (Knight 2014, 83). In this chapter the role and significance of internationality in universities of applied sciences is assessed using news articles, theoretical sources and literature.

3.1 Universities of applied sciences in Finland

There are two sectors in higher education in Finland: universities and universities of applied sciences (UAS). As this research will address the internationality in universities of applied sciences, the focus will be on examining the UAS education. According to Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture the aim of universities of applied sciences is to train professionals according to current labor market needs and organize research, development and innovation which supports education and most importantly the regional development, livelihood and working life. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2016).

There are 24 universities of applied sciences in Finland. At the moment the number of UAS students is 130000 and annually over 20000 Bachelor's degrees are accomplished by the students. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2016). The Government Programme has set out objectives for higher education institutions, for both universities and universities of applied sciences in Finland to be reached by 2025. The objectives consist of the following: (1) strong, competence-renewing units of higher education, (2) transitioning to working life faster via the high quality of education, (3) impact, competitiveness and well-being accomplished through innovation and research and

(4) the community of the higher education as a resource (Ministry of Education and Culture 2016).

3.2 About Finnish and foreign applicants

There were 152000 applicants to higher education institutions in Finland in April 2016. 54% of applicants applied primarily to universities of applied sciences. The number of applicants in 2015 was 154400. The slight decline in applicants could be explained that in 2016 those who had applied but had not paid the application fee were excluded from the total number of applicants. The application fee of 100€ was introduced in spring 2016 to students who do not have EU or ETA-based basic education. (Finnish National Board of Education 2016).

The number of foreign applicants in Finland is relatively small. In 2015 approximately 7% of new students in Bachelor programs in universities of applied sciences were foreign. The most popular field in UAS amongst foreign students was Social Sciences, Business and Administration, where almost 20% of primary applicants and 10% of those who accepted a place to study came outside of Finland. Of all the foreign applicants 85% applied to universities of applied sciences and 15% applied to universities. 84% of the total amount of foreign students who accepted a place to study in Finland came outside of EU. (Finnish National Board of Education 2016).

It has been speculated, and also feared by academics that there will be a decline in foreign applicants when new tuition fees are introduced in 2017 for non-EU students. The annual fees of at least 1500€ will affect almost all non-EU students, except for doctoral students, researchers or the students who study in Finnish or Swedish. In December 2015, the Finnish Parliament decided to impose the fees for students outside of EU or the European Economic Area, where most of the foreign students come from. (Yle Uutiset 2016). It has now also prompted speculations whether the change will in future affect EU nationals – and Finnish students as well. Academics fear that only a thin veil will separate those who are affected and unaffected by the fees. Tuula Teeri, the president of Aalto University condemned Parliament's new outline, stating as follows: "Now we are imposing disproportionately large cuts on the universities that are capable of being internationally competitive." (Yle Uutiset 2016).

3.3 Strategy for the internationalization of higher education institutions

In 2009 Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture published a strategy for the internationalization of higher education for 2009-2015. The results will be published in late 2016. The ministry outlined five main objectives, which would forward the internationalization of Finnish higher education:

1) Genuine international collaboration

The Finnish higher education provides students the skills to perform in the international operational environment. The personnel's international experience and connections improve the quality of research and teaching and support the internationalization of students as well. The higher education institutions provide high quality teaching in a foreign language and actively utilize the possibility for international collaboration.

2) Increasing the quality and appeal of higher education institutions

The Finnish higher education institution is internationally renowned and attractive environment for studying, research and working. Institutions with an international network support the society's internationalization, competitiveness and wellbeing. Gifted foreign students and researchers will choose Finnish institutions due to high-quality teaching, research and the opportunities that Finnish working life can offer.

3) Advancing the export of expertise

Finnish higher education institutions are appealing and trustworthy collaborators that produce international research, education and cultural cooperation of high quality and which will be beneficial for all parties involved. Higher education and expertise will be a nationally significant export.

4) Supporting multicultural society

Higher education institutions operate actively to strengthen civil society and the multicultural community within the institutions. Foreign students, teachers, researchers and other foreign personnel are an asset, which supports internationalization.

5) Advancing global responsibility

Finland's higher education institutions utilize their research and expertise to solve global problems and to strengthen the competence of developing countries. The operations of institutions are based on ethical sustainability and support the students' skills to operate in a global environment and to understand the global effects of their own actions. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2009).

3.4 Features of UAS internationality

According to Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences Arene ry internationality is an essential part of universities of applied sciences, and its role is increasing due to globalization. Internationality has been merged into UAS operations and universities of applied sciences have attached internationality into their strategic activities. The international activity and collaboration of universities of applied sciences are widespread, but the strongest networks are naturally in Europe. Close co-operation is also carried out with Russia, Asia and North and South America. (Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences Arene ry 2016).

The goal of internationality in universities of applied sciences is to increase and support the international expertise of teachers, students and other school personnel. Internationality is realized through the collaboration of education, research, working life and the surrounding society. The important aspects of internationality are student exchange, personnel exchange, teaching in a foreign language, domestic internationalization and international education, research and development projects. (Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences Arene ry 2016).

Wendy Green and Patricie Mertova agree that in internationalizing the education (*internationalization of curriculum*) practice precedes research (2009, 30-32). The literature on the subject is scarce and concepts are understood vaguely. The means for the internationalization of curriculum can be divided into three groups, which are needed concurrently: international mobility for students, internationality of faculty and domestic internationalization.

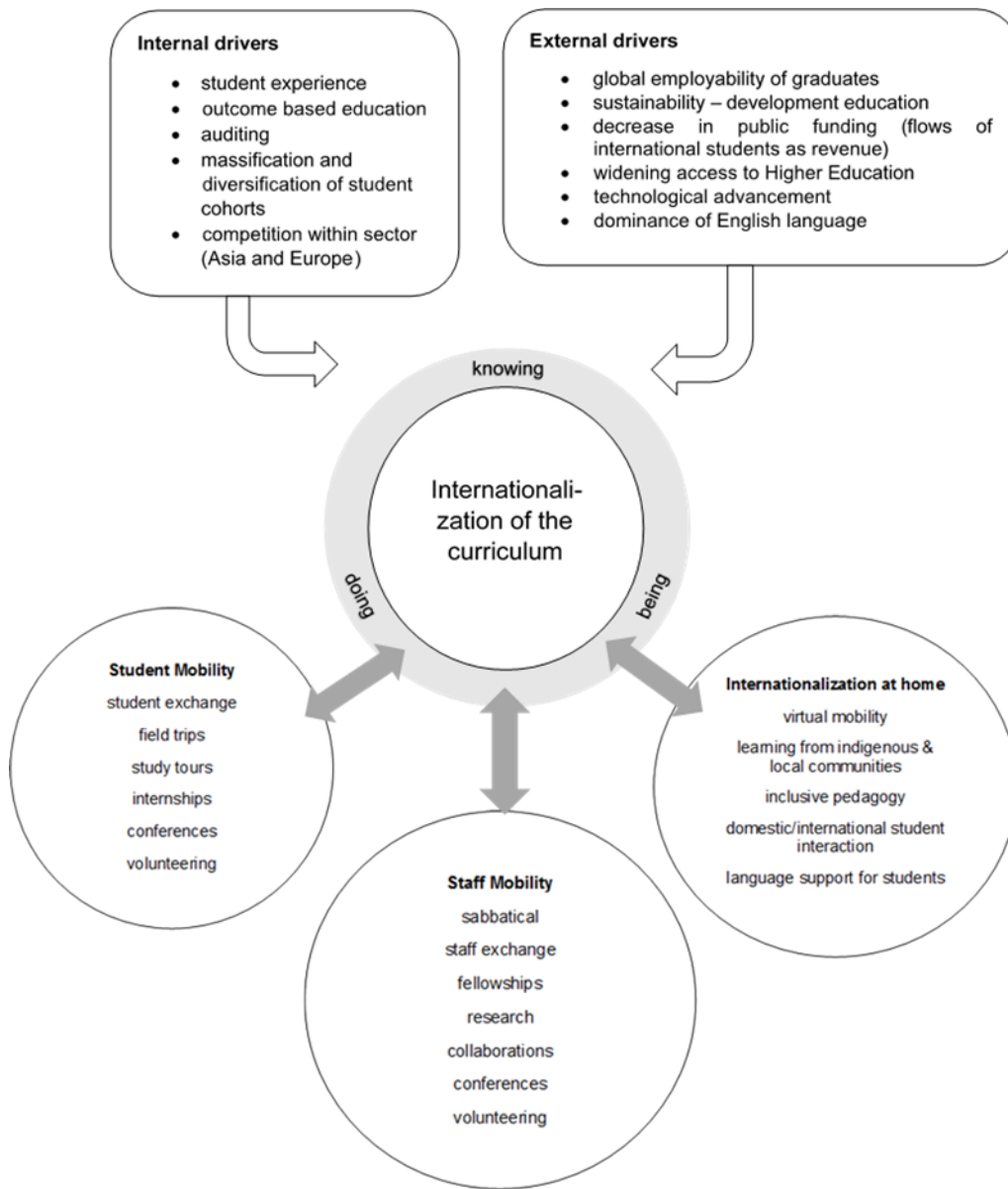


FIGURE 7. Summary of internationalization of the curriculum. (Green & Mertova 2009).

Bologna Process

The key aspect of international activities is the establishment of the European Higher Education Area, also known as the Bologna Process. The goal of the Bologna Process is to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education in contrast to other parts of the world. After the establishment of the Bologna Process Finnish higher education institutions have adapted to a two-cycle degree structure, ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) and the use of the Diploma Supplement for students, which provides a description of the studies of its holder. (Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences Arene ry 2016).

Student and teacher exchange

Student mobility consists of participating in a student exchange program or carrying out an internship abroad, and it is a significant factor in the internationalization of studies (Garam 2012, 43). Finnish UAS students have usually gained their international experience by carrying out a part of their studies abroad. Participating in student exchange programs became more common in the 1990's, when Finnish students gained access in European Union's Erasmus mobility program. Mobility has increased 57% in 10 years. (Garam 2012, 5).

During the academic year 2014-2015 there were 7500 Finnish students carrying out their studies abroad. The most popular countries are the United Kingdom, Sweden, Estonia, the United States and Netherlands. (CIMO 2016). In addition to student exchange, also faculty's ability to abroad visitation assists to export the institution's expertise. Teacher exchange allows the faculty to train themselves. The ability to have guest teachers from abroad enable international viewpoints and expertise in the education without the mobility of the students. For the institution to internationalize, the teachers' international mobility is highly regarded. (Garam 2012, 45).

Internationalization at home

Recently the focus has been on domestic internationality; the international experience gained in a Finnish higher education institution. There are numerous degree programmes conducted in English in Finnish academies, which, in addition to Finnish students, attract foreign students as well. Also guest teachers from abroad and information technology aid in introducing international viewpoints to the students and enabling international communication. Although the Finnish higher education has internationalized during the recent years, internationality is still a challenge to several degree programmes. There are many channels and possibilities to become international, but utilizing them is dependent upon the student's own activeness. (Garam 2012, 66).

Other considerable component of internationality in Finnish UAS studies is degree programmes conducted in English. According to the education website studentum.fi there are 57 English degree programmes in Finland in eleven universities of applied sciences (Studentum 2016). Although studies offered in English do not necessarily equal international education, it would be difficult to imagine an international university of applied sciences without English degree programmes. Developing the supply of English education is thus a resource for other internationalization. An English study module provides a

spontaneous environment for foreign students and teachers. English education requires the international mobility for students or teachers; studying or teaching only amongst Finnish-speakers does not seem very meaningful. (Garam 2012, 58).

4 RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONALIZATION OF FINNISH UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES

This chapter concentrates on the actual research done for the thesis. The research process is described in a chronological order beginning with the topic discovery and research questions, following with a description of the methods used, theory on benchmarking, data analysis and interviewing. Finally, the international functions and the organizational model of Savonia UAS are assessed, followed by examining the operational model for international functions in Savonia UAS and the benchmark institutions Turku UAS, Jyväskylä UAS and Metropolia UAS.

4.1 Research goals and questions

The thesis topic began to form while the author was studying International Business in Savonia UAS, performing a three-month internship abroad and working as an international tutor and the international affairs coordinator of Kuopion Tradenomiopiskelijat ry. Scatteredness and lack of a general guideline in internationality were experienced, generating the idea for improving internationality in Savonia UAS. Internationality, being one of Savonia UAS's strengths and valuable assets, would benefit from a thorough research to identify internationality-related issues and carefully measured suggestions for improvements.

The topic of the research was discovered with the help from the International Coordinator of the Business Administration program in Savonia UAS, Virpi Oksanen. Oksanen, having worked amidst international matters for many years, felt that internationality in Savonia UAS could function better, as there seems to be no general guideline for international matters and the communication between the international operators in Savonia UAS is dispersed. Oksanen suggested, that to improve internationality in Savonia UAS the international functions of Savonia UAS could be compared to other universities of applied sciences, who excel in international matters. The research questions of this thesis are the following:

- How is internationality organized and implemented in Savonia UAS?
- How is internationality organized and implemented in those universities of applied sciences who have the most well-functioning internationality?
- How could internationality in the International Business degree programme of Savonia UAS be improved?

4.2 Research methodology

Qualitative research method was implemented in the thesis, as the answers to the research questions would not be exact or numerical. According to Uwe Flick (2014), qualitative research focuses on analyzing the subjective meaning or the social production of practices, issues or events through collecting non-standardized data. Instead of analyzing numbers and statistics, qualitative research concentrates on analyzing texts and images. (Flick 2014, 542).

Pertti Alasuutari (2011) states that in qualitative research the material of the research is examined as an entirety, since the material will expose the structure of a logical, singular totality. Even if the material consists of separate research units, such as separately interviewed individuals, the argumentation cannot be built upon the differences between the individuals in relation to different variables, or their differences with statistical connections with other variables. Qualitative analysis requires absoluteness, which differs from statistical research. In a qualitative research, statistical argumentation or a vast amount of research units are not possible, or even needed. (Alasuutari 2011, 38-39).

In a quantitative analysis, the argumentation is executed through figures and systematic, statistic connections. The material is usually put into a table form. Every research unit (for example an individual claim) is given a value with the help of different variables. The basic principle of the quantitative method can be compared to experimentation, which occurs in natural sciences. The starting point of a classic, controlled experimentation is a hypothesis, which claims that an independent variable will affect the dependent variable. (Alasuutari 2011, 34).

4.3 Interviews as data collection method

Interviewing was chosen as the data collection method for the research in order to obtain comprehensive data which would benefit with the aim of the thesis. According to Sirkka Hirsjärvi and Helena Hurme (2011, 34) interviewing is the most common data collection method. Interviewing is a very flexible method, which can be applied into various research purposes. An interview is straightforward linguistic interaction with the interviewee, thus the aim of the data collection can be shifted into the wanted direction during the interview. Interviewing helps in discovering the motives behind the answers, since non-lingual clues and hints help the interviewer to understand the responses and their meaning.

There are many types of interviews which be distinguished from each other by the structure and formality of the interview. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2011, 43) list three types of interviews: structured interview, semi-structured interview and unstructured interview. From these interview types the semi-structured interview was chosen to be used in this research. The semi-structured interview focuses on certain themes chosen by the interviewer, and the interviewee's experiences, thoughts, beliefs and feelings can be researched with this method. Instead of precise research questions, the interview proceeds in the framework of themes. (Hirsjärvi&Hurme 2011, 47-48). In this research the interview questions were prepared beforehand by the author, and during the interviews the interview questions received their final form. Follow-up questions were also asked during the interviews.

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2011,47) mention that semi-structured interview is a cross between structured interview and unstructured interview. The question might be the same for all the interviewees, but the order of the questions can vary. There are no specific or "right" answers in a semi-structured interview, since the interviewees answer the questions in their own words. Flick (2014, 217) says that in a semi-structured interview the interviewees' stock of knowledge on the subject matter is utilized. The knowledge includes explicit and immediate assumptions, which the interviewees can express impulsively when answering open questions. This interview type allowed the interviewees to ponder their responses, and during the interviews the interview questions generated new ideas and brought forth forgotten thoughts and opinions. During the interviews, it was emphasized that there would be no correct answers, only the experiences and the personal opinions of the interviewees would matter. The interview questions were specifically constructed so that they could not be answered with just saying yes or no.

4.4 Interview design

There were altogether eleven people selected for the interviews. Five (5) interviewees were from Savonia UAS to gain a comprehensive overview of the international functions and internationality-related problems in the institution; six (6) interviewees were selected from other universities of applied sciences to execute the benchmarking part of the research. The author was intrigued to discover what kind of solutions would the members of Savonia UAS suggest in order to solve the complications concerning the international functions. This aided in discovering the most prominent issues before implementing the benchmarking. Four (4) of the five (5) people were faculty members and one person was a student. All interviewees were connected to internationality in Savonia UAS through their work or studies. The interviewees from Savonia UAS were Juha Asikainen, the

Executive Director of Student Union SAVOTTA; Marina Malinen, the International Relations Coordinator; Petteri Alanko, the Communications Manager; Pirjo Venhovaara, the Student Counselling Coordinator and Niko Kosunen, a fourth-year International Business student and an international tutor.

The interview questions were modified for each interviewee (see Appendices 1 to 4). The aim of the questions was to discover the interviewees' opinions regarding the international functions in Savonia UAS. The questions centered around the current situation of international functions in Savonia UAS, issues regarding internationality, solutions to the problems and predictions about the situation in the future. Participants were chosen to construct a comprehensive image about the internationality in Savonia UAS, since they all have worked amidst internationality and have an insight into the internationality's problematics. Some of the questions were modified or ignored during the interviews, if the interviewees struggled to answer the questions. The interviews took place in Microkatu campus in Kuopio between 10 and 25 November 2016. The language used in the interviews was Finnish, which is translated in English in the appendices so that the structure of this research would be coherent.

The people chosen for the benchmarking interviews were Markus Virtanen, the International Affairs Correspondent of the student union TUO of Turku University of Applied Sciences; Kaisa Nauska, the International Business Correspondent of the business student association Trombi ry of Metropolia University of Applied Sciences; Linda Holma, the International Tutoring Correspondent of the student union JAMKO of Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences; Anu Härkönen, the Head of International Affairs of Turku UAS; Arja Hannukainen, the Head of International Relations of Metropolia UAS and Nina Björn, the International Relations Manager of Jyväskylä UAS.

The author researched the webpages of the universities of applied sciences in order to find the international affair correspondents and international relations managers of each institution and then approached the persons via email or by phone. The questions for the student union or association representatives were different from the questions for the international relations managers (see appendix 5 and 6). Two of the interviews were held via Skype and four via phone. The interviews took place between 28 November and 8 December 2016. The language used in the interviews was Finnish, but in the appendix the questions are translated into English for the same reason as above. In addition to the benchmarking interviews, literature on each institution's internationality was also used to gain comprehensive data.

4.5 Data analysis

The semi-structured interviews as a data collection method enabled acquiring qualitative data for this research. After acquiring the data from the interviews, the author produced basic level transcriptions of the contents. The spoken words and the notes made by the author were transformed into comprehensive units, which were easy to organize and utilize when the actual data analysis took place. When analyzing qualitative data, it is important to “read between the lines” in order to discover the explicit and implicit levels of meaning. Usually what is *not* said can also be of interest. Before the analysis can begin, the data needs to be prepared and organized. This means recording the interviews or taking notes during the interviews. Then the data is transcribed in its entirety. The next step is organizing the administration of the files with the data, so that the interviews or notes can be monitored and handled. Finally, the large sets of data can be more easily analyzed. (Flick 2014, 370-372). Interpretation is the most crucial activity in qualitative data analysis in order to explain the data, since without interpretation, one cannot make sense of the data (Flick 2014, 375).

4.6 Benchmarking

A company must continuously develop their business idea, their products, processes and the expertise of their faculty (Niva&Tuominen 2005, 10.) Benchmarking is a constant and organized process which is used to measure and analyze the performance of products, services and processes. The performance is then compared to the best on the market. The objective is to learn from the best and then utilize the information to develop one's own operations. Benchmarking is also a humbleness; it is about realizing that others might function better in some areas. Benchmarking requires wisdom: one must learn how others succeed in their operations and how could one achieve the same level of success, or even exceed it. (Niva&Tuominen 2005, 5).

According to Tim Stapenhurst (2009, 3-6) benchmarking is a method that is used when an organization wants to compare their performance with others and identify and adopt practices that would improve their performance. Benchmarking can be exercised in any area where performance is wanted to be compared to learn from others and to adapt ideas, methods or practices. “Benchmarking is a method of measuring and improving our organizational performance by comparing ourselves with the best”, Stapenhurst summarizes. There are two phases in benchmarking:

Benchmarking performance

- measure the performance levels of participants
- recognize the differences between participants, usually between the best performers
- measure the potential benefit for each participant to function at the level of the best performer

Changing the practices in order to improve performance possibly, not necessarily by learning from other participants. (Stapenhurst 2009, 5).

There are several benchmarking methods, such as the public domain benchmarking, database benchmarking, survey benchmarking, one-to-one benchmarking and review benchmarking (Stapenhurst 2009, 19). In this research the one-to-one method is practiced. The concept of one-to-one benchmarking is finding out which organizations are the best in their field, or amongst the best at performing the aspect that needs to be improved in the home organization. Then the chosen organizations are visited in order to examine their performance level and to learn how they achieve the level. Their practices are studied and adapted where necessary, and improving the practices, where possible. Finally, the new practices are adopted into the home organization. (Stapenhurst 2009, 26).

Niva and Tuominen (2005, 12-15) name four benchmarking methods: strategic benchmarking, product benchmarking, process benchmarking and performance benchmarking. The performance benchmarking is utilized in this research. In a situation where performance benchmarking is needed, the processes in one's own organization resemble the processes in the other organizations. The differences can be found in the expertise of the organization members and in the technology they utilize. When finding out about the expertise of others, it is needed to know how they operate and function. Good new methods are usually taken for granted or perceived as self-evident, but adopting them asks for real skills.

There are several steps in the benchmarking process. First, the target of benchmarking is specified by recognizing the area which needs improvement and which, after improved, could bring additional value to the company. Then the benchmark organizations are identified by observing which organizations function better than the home organization. Third step is to measure the differences between the performance of the home organization and others. Then the factors behind the other organizations' success are identified. At this point the operations in the home organization need to be evaluated and

examined to discover the factors which disturb the performance. When these issues have been acknowledged, it is time to learn from the other organizations. The emphasis will be on the performance-enhancing factors. Then the performance objectives for the home organization are set. There are two types of objectives: others can be immediately put to use and others require a longer time span. Afterwards the required modifications are planned, an action plan is crafted and changes are implemented. The modifications need to be established and continuously developed in order to ensure that the objectives are reached and that the benchmarking level is exceeded. The final step is to begin the benchmarking process again with new objectives. A long-period objective is determined and thus the benchmarking process can commence. (Niva&Tuominen 2005, 35).

4.7 Benchmarking participant institutions

The benchmarking participant institutions in this research were suggested by Virpi Oksanen, the International Coordinator in Savonia's Business Administration program. Being experienced in academic internationality, Oksanen could suggest the universities of applied sciences where the international functions are exceptional. Based on these suggestions, Turku University of Applied Sciences and JAMK University of Applied Sciences were chosen for the benchmarking. The author also chose Metropolia University of Applied Sciences for the research, since several foreign degree students in Savonia's International Business degree programme have transferred to study in the corresponding program in Metropolia UAS. As mentioned in subchapter 4.4, two people from the institutions were interviewed for this research; a student union or association representative, and the head of international relations.

Turku University of Applied Sciences

Turku UAS, one of the largest universities of applied sciences in Finland, was founded in 1992. Turku UAS operates in three cities and provides education on four different fields. In 2015 there were 8850 students and 657 members of faculty. The amount of outgoing and incoming exchange students was the same; 321 students. There were 357 foreign degree students. (Turku University of Applied Sciences 2016). A new strategy was formed in early 2015 in order to create clear guidelines for the organization. According to the strategy, Turku UAS will create expertise and prosperity in the area by producing "Excellence in Action", the best, international level expertise for the good of the community (Turku University of Applied Sciences 2016). There are three degree programs in English: International Business, Information and Communications Technology and Nursing (Turku University of Applied Sciences 2016).

Metropolia University of Applied Sciences

Metropolia UAS was founded in 2008 and operates in Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa. In 2015 there were 16454 students, which makes Metropolia the largest university of applied sciences in Finland. In 2015 there were 65 degree programs, of which 13 were in English. (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences). There are three bachelor-level Business Administration degree programs: European Business Administration, European Management and International Business and Logistics (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences 2016). Metropolia UAS states that it is one of the most international universities of applied sciences in Finland. The internationality consists of international degree programs, mobility of students and teachers, international internship opportunities and various projects. There are almost 100 different nationalities studying in Metropolia UAS every year and in addition to foreign degree students, there are 400 exchange students studying in Metropolia UAS annually. (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences

Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences, operating in Jyväskylä and Saarijärvi, was founded in 1994. There are over 8000 students and 600 faculty members. (Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences 2016). Jyväskylä UAS offers 30 degree programs on eight educational fields, and there are three international degree programs; International Business, International Logistics and Nursing (Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences 2016). The strategy of Jyväskylä UAS is to be an internationally known reformer of education and developer of competence.

To comprehend the entirety of internationality in each of these institutions, it must be noted that international activities arranged by the student representatives are organized differently. In the business student associations of Turku UAS and Jyväskylä UAS, Trade ry and Konkurssi ry respectively, there are no roles for international correspondents within the student boards (Opiskelijayhdistys Konkurssi ry 2016 & Opiskelijayhdistys Trade ry 2016). Instead of the student associations, the international correspondents work in the boards of the student unions of each institution, the Student Union of the Turku University of Applied Sciences TUO and the Student Union of Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences JAMKO (Student Union of the Turku University of Applied Sciences TUO 2016 & Student Union of Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences JAMKO 2016).

4.8 Internationality in Savonia UAS

Internationality is a part of Savonia's operations, thus Savonia UAS has an important role in the internationalization of the area and its livelihood and increasing international expertise. Savonia UAS has higher education collaborators in over 30 countries. Active student and personnel mobility and participating in international collaboration projects with foreign institutions are very common. There are numerous nationalities studying in Savonia's international degree programs. Savonia UAS participates in Erasmus, First, Tempus, Nordplus and North-South-South exchange programs. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

International research, development and innovation

Savonia UAS creates new expertise around the area and supports the area's development. Savonia UAS is a pioneer in developing livelihood and services. The area gains access to the most contemporary information and expertise through the activity in research, development and innovation. In addition to domestic projects, Savonia UAS also operates in international projects and networks. The most important partnerships have been created to support Savonia's own strategy. The motive for Savonia's international research, development and innovation projects is development of education. Students are able to participate and work in international projects of their field. Savonia's degree programs conducted in English create a natural means for student exchange. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

Participating in international activity in research, development and innovation is essential for the faculty to improve their own expertise and to have an influence in their own professional field. The goal of every abroad visitation for international research, development and innovation is to discover projects for the students, detect potential needs for development, release publications and to search for new possibilities to export Savonia's education. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

Student and staff mobility

Savonia UAS supports internationalization and all the practical procedures relating to it. Students are encouraged to apply for exchange, either to study, perform an internship or to work on their final thesis. The international coordinators of the degree programs provide information on exchange possibilities. Exchange programs and application periods are also announced in Savonia's intranet Reppu and in student exchange-related info sessions. According to Savonia UAS, student exchange is beneficial because it improves language skills, increases the understanding of foreign cultures, helps in gaining essential

contacts and access education in a field where expertise is greater than in Finland. An exchange period supports personal growth, and future employers will also acknowledge international experience. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

The internationalizing Savonia UAS needs professionals who have versatile international expertise. The teachers and faculty of Savonia UAS have an access to perform an exchange period abroad within various exchange programs. During the exchange the emphasis will be on education, education administration, research and development or the functioning of economic life. International collaboration has produced closely cooperation networks. The goal of the networks is to gain and share expertise, and to evoke collaborative negotiations to accomplish matters relating to education, research and development projects. Savonia UAS has networks in Nordic countries, EU countries, Russia, Ukraine, Africa and China. The networks are supported for example by Erasmus, Nordplus, First, Tempus and North-South-South programs. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

Education in English

A Bachelor's Degree Programme is composed of a vast range of different courses which aim at expertise-requiring specialist jobs. The degree programme can contain expertise of various specialization fields, which signifies that specialized studies partly aim at jobs where a particular professional expertise is needed. A study module is composed of two or more courses which are grouped together based on the subject or the area that they focus on. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

In 2017 Savonia UAS will offer two Bachelor Degree Programs in English: Mechanical Engineering program (Bachelor of Engineering) is worth 240 credits and will last for four years, while International Business program (Bachelor of Business Administration) consists of 210 credits and will last three and a half years. In addition to the degree programs a wide range of courses and study modules conducted in English are available in all study programs at Savonia UAS. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

International tutoring

Savonia UAS and student union SAVOTTA offer international tutoring services for students from abroad. International tutors guide and assist the students in practical, daily issues and they help to link the students to Finnish culture and surroundings. International tutoring is volunteer work and the tutors gain one to three course credits from their work.

(Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016). According to the Guide for Incoming Exchange Students by Savonia UAS (2015), student guidance and tutoring are provided to assist the exchange students in the study process, help in gaining the available teaching resources and provide aid in practical matters. The tutor students voluntarily assist the exchange students after their arrival to Finland. At the beginning of each academic year an orientation is arranged for the new full-time students to introduce Savonia UAS and the degree programs. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2015).

The international tutoring tasks presented in International Tutor's Guidebook (2016) by Student Union of Oulu University of Applied Sciences OSAKO are very similar to the tasks in Savonia UAS. The tasks include participating in the new students' orientation lesson at the beginning of their studies, introducing the studying methods and possibilities and encouraging group spirit (2016, 10-11). Before the new foreign students arrive, the students are contacted via email to welcome them to Finland, inform about important issues, such as the transportation from the airport or train station and the first days of school. Then the apartment documents and keys are collected for the exchange students from student housing company. (Student Union of Oulu University of Applied Sciences 2016, 14).

Although the exchange students are a priority, it needs to also be ensured that the foreign degree students know about their accommodation method. When the students start arriving to Finland, transportation from the airport, train station or bus station is provided. When transporting the student to the apartment, it is advised where the nearest services and grocery stores are, and tutors can even take the students to buy groceries if they wish to.

The first days of school are crucial and tutors need to be around continuously. It is advisable to accompany the exchange students to the school either by walking or by bus. The tutors will participate in the exchange students' orientation week and organize a campus tour where the students are shown the most important places at the campus, such as cafeterias, the library and the teachers' offices. It is important to introduce the student association and its benefits. During the first week arranging a tour around the city to introduce the students their new surroundings and the services available is recommendable. The goal of tutoring is to be available to the new students if they need help or guidance during the crucial first weeks, connect with the students and most importantly, being friendly and helpful. It is essential to stay an active tutor by participating in events with the students and staying open-minded, learning from the exchange

students as they are learning from the international tutors. (Student Union of Oulu University of Applied Sciences 2016, 15-18).

According to the international tutor Niko Kosunen (2016), the exchange students have a possibility to rent a Survival Kit from Kuopion Tradenomiopiskelijat ry at the price of 30 euros. The kit includes bed sheets, towels, tableware and kitchen utensils. The possibility of renting the Survival Kit must be mentioned in the first email sent by the international tutor to the exchange students. If a student is willing to rent the kit, the tutor can bring the kit to the student when transporting the student from their place of arrival to their student apartment. Student apartments do not include sheets, towels or kitchen utensils, so the Survival Kit is a tool that helps the student to settle in their new apartment. The exchange students are asked to return the kits upon the ending of their exchange period. If the kit is returned in good condition with no items missing, the student is compensated with a deposit of ten euros.

4.9 Student unions and associations relating to internationality in Savonia UAS

The Student Union of Savonia UAS (SAVOTTA) connects to internationality in Savonia UAS, since as mentioned previously, SAVOTTA organizes the tutoring activities, and thus also international tutoring is arranged by SAVOTTA. SAVOTTA, founded in 1996, is an autonomous, public corporation. It is a support organization and non-political service for all students of Savonia UAS. SAVOTTA has approximately 3100 members and it offers local, regional and national benefits to the members. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016). SAVOTTA supports the students' financial and social rights and acts as a representative in matters of student's status, studies and education. SAVOTTA coordinates and develops tutoring activities within Savonia UAS. (Savonia-ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelijakunta SAVOTTA 2016).

A body of twelve representatives are in charge of SAVOTTA's highest decision-making power. The students are eligible to vote for representatives each year. SAVOTTA cooperates closely with the administration of Savonia UAS and influences the development of education with the working groups of Savonia UAS. SAVOTTA is a member of Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (SAMOK), where the students of Savonia UAS can have an influence on national matters. The members of SAVOTTA's executive board are also eligible to attend SAMOK's seminars. SAMOK is SAVOTTA's messenger to national organizations and state administration. (Savonia-ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelijakunta SAVOTTA 2016).

Since this research focuses on internationality in the International Business degree programme in Savonia UAS, the business administration student association Kuopion Tradenomiopiskelijat ry (KuoTra ry) will be presented as well. Kuopion Tradenomiopiskelijat ry was founded in 2009. The goal of KuoTra ry is to support the business administration students of Savonia UAS in the matters of studying, promotion of interest and student satisfaction. KuoTra ry organizes events and is a promoter of active student life in Kuopio. KuoTra ry is a member of Tradenomiopiskelijaliitto TROL ry (the National Union of BBA students), which represents business administration and international business students on a national level. (Tuutorin Taskumatti 2015). There are various roles within the board of KuoTra:

- The **chairperson** represents the association and coordinates its activities. The chairperson supervises the activity of each board member and assists them in their tasks if needed. The role of the chairperson is very important for the sake of the association's image.
- The **secretary** assists the chairperson in daily matters. The secretary composes the agenda for each board meeting and with the chairperson forwards the summons to a meeting to the board members.
- The **treasurer** oversees the association's accounting and is responsible for the float and the cashbook. The treasurer can admit cash from the float for minor purchases. Each year the treasurer and the chairperson form the budget for the association, which is presented annually in the general autumn meeting. The treasurer also draws a budget for the main events of KuoTra, such as the annual winter trip to Tahko. The budget is assessed by the treasurer during the accounting period and the treasurer ensures that all the necessary documents are delivered to the accounting company to form the financial statement.
- The tasks of the **social policy and education policy correspondent** are to intervene if there are faults in the education, suggest improvements and promote the students interest in regards of education. The correspondent provides information on local and national matters relating to student rights and benefits and they can collaborate with the school and the teachers to enhance education and to express the association's viewpoints and suggestions for improvement.

- The **international affairs correspondent** collaborates with international tutors and organizes the tutoring activities for the exchange students. The correspondent, with the help of international tutors, assist the exchange students to adjust to studies and the life in Finland. The tasks include organizing transportation from the airport to the student apartments when the exchange students arrive to Finland and assist the students with various matters relating to the life in Finland and their studies. The correspondent also participates in organizing events for the exchange students and recruits new international tutors.
- The **tutor correspondent** organizes the tutoring activity and maintains contact with the student counsellor, tutor teachers and the representatives of student union SAVOTTA. The correspondent is a communicator between the board, school and the tutors. The correspondent informs the tutors on different events, delegates tutoring tasks and organizes the application process for new tutors. The correspondent is a member of the board of SAVOTTA, and collaborates closely with the student union. SAVOTTA is responsible for organizing the tutor training and tutor recreation in Savonia UAS.
- The **event correspondent's** responsibility is to organize and coordinate the events by KuoTra, and informing the students of upcoming events.
- The **sports correspondent** is responsible for organizing KuoTra's weekly sports shift for the students. The correspondent informs the students on sports-related matters and organizes and coordinates student sports events. (Ollikainen & Rytönen 2012, 28-32).

4.10 Savonia UAS organizational structure

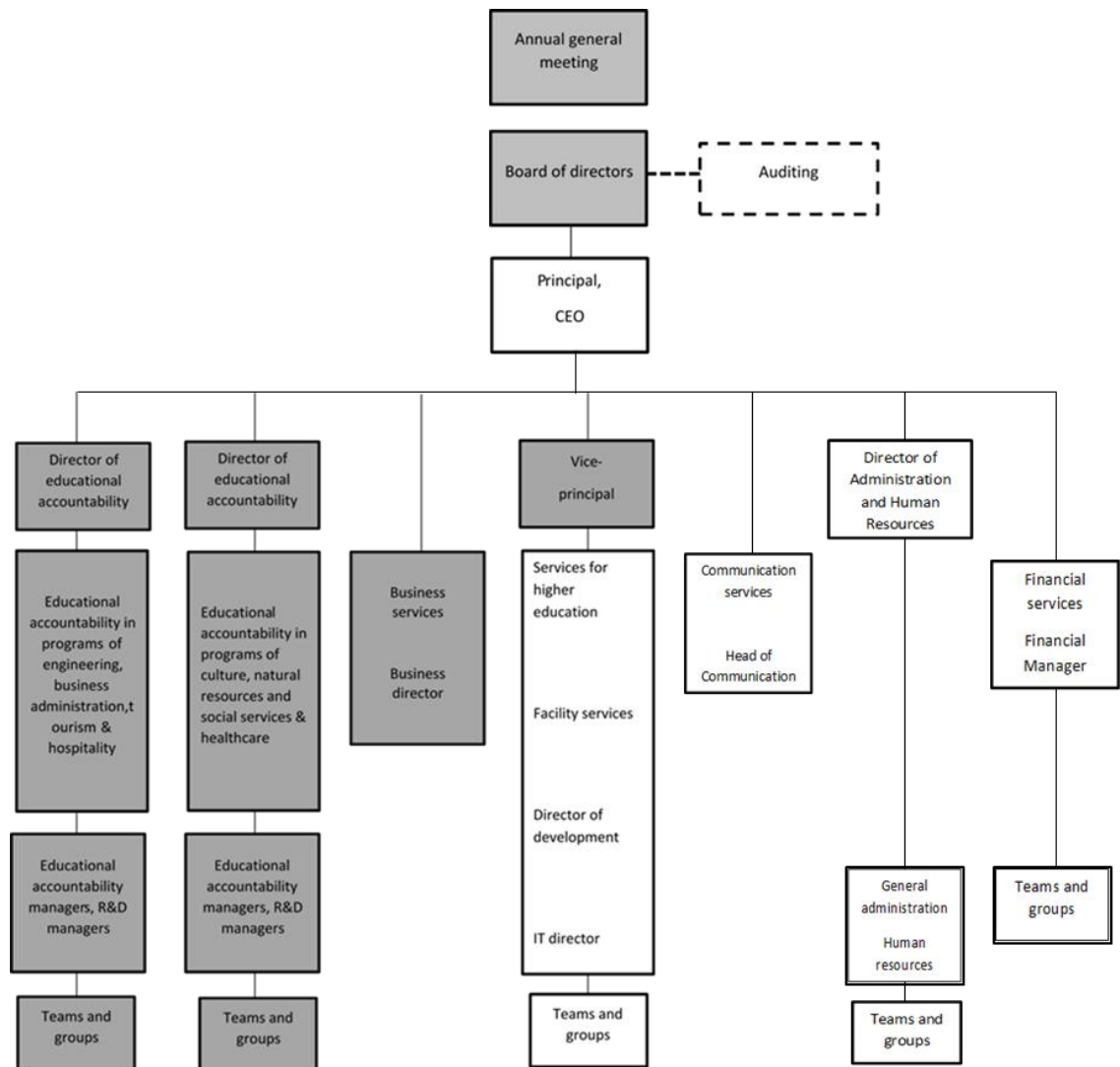


FIGURE 6. Organization structure (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016)

Savonia University of Applied Sciences, founded in 1992, is a joint-stock, independent body corporate, which autonomously manages the tasks that are set by the Universities of applied sciences Act. In its operations Savonia UAS follows strategy, the fundamental objectives regarding operations and finance and the principles of good management and administration. The headquarters of Savonia UAS is located in Kuopio, and activity also takes place in Iisalmi and Varkaus. According to Savonia UAS the management's task is to guide the operations goal-directed and in accordance with the strategy. The custom practises of educational accountability and services take place in functional teams, as seen in Figure 6 above. The annual general meeting consisting of the body of delegates is the highest decision-making body in Savonia UAS. The cities of Iisalmi, Kiuruvesi, Kuopio and Varkaus, the owners of Savonia UAS are represented at the annual general meeting. There are nine members in the body of delegates: president, vice-president,

faculty member, student member and five other members. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

There are two fields of educational accountability where Savonia's activities on education, research, development and innovation activity take place. These are degrees in technology, environment, business administration and tourism and hospitality, and degrees in social services, healthcare, culture and natural resources. The directors of educational accountability are responsible for directing the fields of educational accountability with the help from the management of the field. The educational managers are Kaija Sääski (technology, environment, business administration, tourism and hospitality) and Salla Seppänen (social services, healthcare, culture and natural resources). Savonia UAS supports the development and realization of basic tasks with activity from administrative- and higher education services. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

The higher education services constitute of the following: student services, international services, library services, information services and data administration services. The administrative services cover faculty services, general administrative services, financial services, facility services and procurement. The vice-principal of Savonia UAS manages the higher education services and facility services, while the Director of Administration and Human Resources is responsible for managing other administrative services. Both higher education services and administrative services are conducted in the service steering groups. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

4.11 Organizational structure of international functions

Although international activity within higher education institutions is more diverse than for example in Finnish upper secondary institutions, there are similarities in organizing the international activity. According to the Finnish National Board of Education (2010) it is essential to follow the guidelines of the institution's management and ensure the management's commitment when organizing international activity within the institution. In most institutions, a faculty member is appointed to oversee international activity in each unit and to ensure the alignment of the activity. The person in charge of international activity usually works with a team consisting of the international correspondents of each unit or profit centre. Large institutions often have units of international activity, which, in addition to the person in charge, include the coordinators of international student services and project administration. International activity calls for multi-taskers: the requirement is to manage the activity of the whole organization on a detailed level and to understand the

current situation of the operational environment and the changes it might face in the future. The faculty of international activity can include the roles of a chief or a manager of international activity, international coordinators, project coordinators, assistants and teachers.

The type of the organizational structure is crucial, since it creates the foundation for the business and determines the decision-making protocol (CFO Edge 2016). All three international relations managers of the benchmark institutions mentioned, that the operating model of the international functions in their institution is either **centralized**, **decentralized** or **partially-centralized**, **partially-decentralized**. In a centralized organization, top-down authority is exercised. Owners or managers make the key decisions, with a little or no participation from the employees. The owners or managers develop and set the objectives, so that the objectives are similar throughout the organization. In a decentralized organization, multiple individuals can make important decisions and set policies that guide the activity within the organization. Team environment is practised, which develops a wide range of input. The aim is to generate more ideas and solutions. Employees can make decisions, with little or no input from owners or managers. (CFO Edge 2016).

Savonia University of Applied Sciences

In Savonia UAS the board of directors is the highest supervisor, preceding the principal. The vice-principal is the manager of international functions, and underneath his supervision the activity of student and mobility services take place, as seen on Figure 6. The operating model used in international functions is decentralized (Oksanen 12 December 2016). As Savonia UAS will soon hire an International Affairs Executive, this person will oversee international functions in Savonia UAS. The immediate manager of the executive will be the vice principal. The executive will oversee the activity of the international coordinators in each degree programme. (Malinen 16 November 2016). There are two international coordinators in the Business Administration/International Business and the Tourism and Hospitality programmes of Savonia UAS, one for incoming and one for outgoing students. There is one international coordinator in the programs of Engineering and Technology, Health Care, Design and Music and Dance. The campuses in other towns also have their own international coordinators, one in Iisalmi and two in Varkaus. (Savonia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

Turku University of Applied Sciences

In Turku University of Applied Sciences, the highest decision-making body is the Board of Turku University of Applied Sciences Ltd. The Rector and President is the next person in charge, followed by the Vice Rector and the Director of Services (Turku University of Applied Sciences 2016). Anu Härkönen, the Head of International Affairs says that the operating model of international services is **decentralized**, meaning that the international relations staff work amidst several administrative functions, such as Future Learning Design, Student Services, Human Resources, Communication Services and RDI Resources. The international relations staff works in four profit centres at the faculty level (Härkönen 13 December 2016). Turku UAS level guidelines are made at the central administration, and the Vice Rector oversees internationalization of education and research (Härkönen 13 December 2016). Härkönen works alongside a HR specialist, a project planner, two international relations officers and a partnership manager. (Turku University of Applied Sciences 2016).

Metropolia University of Applied Sciences

The administrative organs in Metropolia University of Applied Sciences are the management group in which for example the principal belongs to, the board of directors and the advisory councils (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences 2016). In Metropolia UAS every degree programme has its own advisory council, which consists of representatives of the faculty, students and the working life. The objectives of the advisory councils are creating and developing the degree program's connections with working life, developing the tasks and operations relating to curricula, giving statements on degree program-related matters and making initiatives for the development of operations within the degree programme (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences 2016). The international services team, which works under the supervision of Director of Academic Services, consists of the head of international relations Arja Hannukainen, an Erasmus Institutional Coordinator and an International Planner. (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences 2016).

There are two international coordinators in the degree programs of Culture and Creative Industries and Technology. In addition, the Technology program has four faculty members in charge of the work placements abroad; two placement coordinators, a principal lecturer and a study coordinator. In Business Administration, alongside the international coordinator, there are faculty members in charge of work placement abroad, such as a placement adviser and two study coordinators. In the programs of Health Care and Nursing, Well-being there is one international coordinator in each program. (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences 2016). Altogether there are seven international offices in

the Helsinki metropolitan area. The operating model of international services is **partially-centralized, partially-decentralized** (Hannukainen 8 December 2016).

Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences

In Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences the highest decision-making organs are the board of Jyväskylän Ammattikorkeakoulu Oy and the management group, which consists of the principal, the vice-principal and seven managers (Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences 2016). The vice-president is the manager of international services (Björn 8 December 2016). Nina Björn, the International Relations Manager, is the head of international services. The international services team consists of three international coordinators, who oversee the outgoing and incoming student mobility, two International Relations Planners and an International Specialist. In addition to International Services the degree programs in Jyväskylä UAS have their own international coordinators and lecturers, who act as academic advisors to students, staff and partners. (Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences 2016)

As the International Services take care of mobility and cooperation-related planning, developing, administration and coordination of processes, support services and documents, the academic advisors oversee the academic contents and matters connected to international cooperation, such as mobility, agreements and cooperation in education. There is one academic advisor in each study field, which are Teacher Education, School of Business, Industrial Engineering, Logistics, Information Technology and Institute of Bioeconomy. There are also practical training coordinators in each study field. (Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences 2016). The operating model of international services is **centralized** (Björn 8 December 2016).

As mentioned earlier by Petersen (2007) that none of the traditional organization theories can fully describe all the dimensions of a higher education organization, the same applies to the organizational structure of international functions in Finnish universities of applied sciences. Marina Malinen, the International Relations Coordinator of Savonia UAS said that Savonia UAS is a team organization (16 November 2016), which, in addition to the international functions in Savonia UAS also applies to the international functions of Turku UAS, Metropolia UAS and Jyväskylä UAS. The international functions are a division in the matrix structure, which according to Kuoppala (2014, 276) is the general operating model in universities of applied sciences.

5 FINDINGS

The interview findings are presented so that related answers are grouped under subheadings. Flick (2014, 372) calls this method coding, which means labeling and categorizing the data. Coding is mainly working with the collected materials in order to develop concepts which can then be labeled, sorted and compared. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2011, 147) call this phase “categorizing the material”. Categorizing the data is not enough for the analysis. That is why the material needs to be combined to find an order and similarities within the material, which can then be crafted into units. (Hirsjärvi&Hurme 2011, 147). In this chapter the data from the interviews is restructured and grouped to create a purposeful analysis. The first section addresses the findings amongst the members of Savonia UAS and in the second section the findings from the benchmarking are presented.

5.1 Savonia UAS findings

Internationality in Savonia UAS

In order to comprehend the concept of internationality in Savonia UAS, interviewees were asked their opinion on what internationality in Savonia consists of. Alanko said that the most important aspects of internationality in Savonia UAS are **exporting the education**, **international projects** and the **marketing** of international degree programs. Malinen said that exporting the education is one of the most vital functions in addition to student and staff exchange, internships abroad, international development projects, domestic internationalization and research, development and innovation projects. According to Malinen, internationality is also student and tutor activity and international events.

Asikainen, speaking from the student union’s viewpoint, said that internationality is above all being open and accepting different cultures. He continued that internationalization and globalization are a standard nowadays and for an organization to function, international collaboration is crucial, especially in an academic organization. Asikainen said that internationality in Savonia UAS consists of **incoming and outgoing exchange students** and **international tutoring**. International tutoring, he said, has been exceptional this semester since the international tutors have organized much more international events and trips, when compared to previous years. Kosunen offered a student point-of-view by saying that internationality in Savonia UAS consists of international students, collaboration with foreign partner universities, international events, projects with international companies and using the English language in studies.

This topic was included in the interviews to demonstrate the importance of internationality in an academic institution. Asikainen, Malinen and Kosunen held internationality as a very valuable asset for the institution. According to Malinen, internationality teaches the students **independence**, **language skills** and **social skills**. It widens the students' worldview. The faculty benefits from internationality as well: internationality keeps language skills and **professional competence** up-to-date and enables the teachers to compare different teaching methods and education systems. Internationality provides a possibility to network and develop projects. Asikainen said that since internationalization is possible, it should be utilized. Close **collaboration** with international partner schools eases the Finnish students' mobility process, and in the future the number of double-degrees will rise and the students of Savonia UAS might have a possibility to accomplish a double-degree abroad. That is why maintaining the collaboration with foreign schools is very important.

Providing a student perspective, Kosunen said that the internationality of Savonia UAS has great importance. The students grow, learn and gain interaction skills. According to Kosunen using a foreign language is good for the mind as well; it exercises the brains and can even help fighting dementia. Using a different language thus has health benefits. Asikainen said, from the faculty's point of view, that internationality broadens the perspective. "Our sandbox will remain small if we only see matters from our point of view", Asikainen said, meaning that internationality is essential for Finland since the domestic markets are limited. International collaboration, according to Asikainen, is an unconditional requirement to ensure the wellbeing of Finland.

Issues in internationality of Savonia UAS

One of the main objectives during the interviews for the members of Savonia UAS was to discover the issues the members felt that interfered with the international functions in Savonia UAS. The interviewees were asked to list the issues they felt were the most prominent in internationality in order to discover and comprehend the extent of the issues. When Malinen was asked to describe the internationality of Savonia with four words, her reply was "in need of improvement". The **lack of marketing** was a topic which arose during many of the interviews. Alanko, Malinen and Kosunen mentioned that marketing the internationality of Savonia UAS is insufficient and challenging at the moment. Marketing is vital when attracting new potential students, so a concern was raised how is Savonia UAS able to tempt new foreign students without a coherent marketing plan. Kosunen thought that marketing should be revolutionized and reinvented: it should inspire new potential students. Savonia UAS should give the students a reason to come to study in our institution.

Alanko and Kosunen felt that the alumni activity, a form of marketing, is inadequate. According to Alanko there should be more emphasis on **alumni activity**, since spreading the message about the international studies at Savonia UAS in foreign higher education institutions is important in order to attract more students. Savonia's students should be utilized in this matter, since they can efficiently spread the information abroad. There are plans for a few International Business students to visit their home countries' academic institutions to market Savonia UAS and this kind of activity should be encouraged more. For example, Haris Buche, a second-year student is planning to travel to his home country Macedonia to make Savonia UAS known for Macedonian students.

When Kosunen spent an exchange semester in China in 2015, he marketed the international studies of Savonia UAS to his fellow Chinese students and consequently attracted the students to apply for an exchange period in Savonia UAS. Kosunen said that for example the number of Vietnamese and Chinese degree students has subsided significantly since 2013. In fall 2016 there were only three foreign degree students amongst the new International Business students, 40 were Finnish. When Kosunen, a peer student of the author of this research began his studies in fall 2013, almost half the student in the International Business class were foreign.

Malinen, Kosunen, Asikainen and Alanko mentioned that international functions are shattered and dispersed, as there is no **general guideline** on internationality. Venhovaara mentioned that international functions lack **coordination** and she is concerned whether the strategic guidelines concerning internationality are accurate. Malinen said that the faculty lacks **resources**: international coordinators are usually teachers, and she wondered how are they able to focus on teaching, students and internationality. Malinen continued that the operating model of Savonia UAS is a team organization; every team has a teacher who oversees the international matters. The **communication** between the teams is disjointed and incoherent, thus the international activities of Savonia UAS should be reorganized and resorted and a change in the operating model is needed. Asikainen said that the concept of "Savonian internationality" is vague and an **action plan** is needed. He said that internationality should not be done by a separate individual, internationality should be an objective for all members of Savonia UAS.

According to Venhovaara, there are many important aspects in the curriculum such as innovation, work welfare and lifelong learning. She wondered, whether internationality is emphasized enough. Concerns were also raised among the interviewees whether the faculty of Savonia UAS can fully **commit to internationality**. Malinen said that only a small number of teachers are truly active in international matters and although staff

exchange has double during the past few years, the situation could be better. Alanko felt that the staff does not utilize the mobility possibilities sufficiently. Malinen continued that in addition to their own activity, the teachers should encourage the students to be active in internationality as well. This is concurred by Asikainen, who said that the students should be encouraged to take part in internationality.

Kosunen thought that the staff should fully commit to multiculturality and that in international degree programs the **communication and teaching should be in English**. There was an incident during the fall semester 2016 where a teacher sometimes lectured in Finnish, despite teaching the International Business group. Sometimes important messages about the lectures and homework were sent in Finnish, although there are three foreign students in the group with no skills in Finnish language. The students come to study in Savonia UAS to gain an international degree, so English should be used even if there were no foreign people in the class. Kosunen wondered whether English should be made a mandatory language in English-spoken degree programs. Savonia UAS should ensure that the students are taught in English.

Alanko was concerned whether there is enough information provided in English on the **website of Savonia UAS** and **intranet Reppu**. Asikainen said that although there is no need to produce materials in English as much as in Finnish, essential matters should be available in two languages. Venhovaara said that there is no guideline by Savonia UAS when the English language should be used. She continued that only the most essential information should be available in two languages, since there are areas which have no need for an English translation. According to Venhovaara, Savonia UAS has not set minimum requirements for the use of English.

Malinen said that resources should be allocated efficiently without forgetting internationality, since resources are naturally the base for the international functions. Malinen continued that if there are enough resources, Savonia UAS should organize **more international events**. According to Malinen, the faculty of Savonia UAS is also a resource for internationality, thus the faculty should be inspired to have a larger part in international operations. Malinen said that when the faculty is inspired, the students will be as well, as the teachers encourage them. According to Kosunen English is a great resource in Savonia UAS, thus **increasing the English language skills and usage** amongst staff is important. Kosunen also mentioned that the foreign teachers in Savonia UAS, such as Abdelazim Hannoura, are a great resource to the institution as well. When discussing about the resources that international team would require, Asikainen said that financial

aid from the institution will be needed since for example international events cannot be executed without funding.

According to Kosunen **the international student satisfaction** is crucial, which makes international tutoring extremely important. He said that this year the students have been very content with the tutors. Malinen felt that there could be more of international tutoring, and Asikainen said that the international tutors should be encouraged to be even more active. According to Asikainen Savonia UAS should utilize the enthusiasm of the international tutors, who have organized trips, events and activities in fall semester 2016. The international tutors should not be left to their own devices, instead they should be fully included into international activities.

According to Asikainen, there should be no line between Finnish tutors and international tutors. Asikainen felt that Savonia UAS could learn teamwork and internationalization skills from the international tutors, since **teamwork** is the keyword in international activity. Asikainen summed that in 2015 international students organized the international event Aisti, which was ultimately sold out because of its popularity. According to Asikainen, Savonia UAS could learn from this kind of activity and collaboration. Kosunen mentioned about problems relating to **international tutoring** and **lack of information**. The faculty of Savonia UAS is sometimes unaware who the head international tutors are; the head tutors are responsible for informing other tutors of upcoming activities and important issues regarding tutoring or new exchange students. Kosunen concluded that if the head tutors do not receive information from the faculty, how could the tutors receive it?

Kosunen, having worked as an international tutor for almost three years, felt that there should be more **recreational evenings** for the international tutors, since the language that is used in recreational activities for all Business Administration/International Business tutors is Finnish. When participating in these joint recreational get-togethers the foreign tutors have been left out because of the language barrier. Malinen felt that there should be more collaboration between the Finnish and international tutors, since it would increase the knowledge on cultures.

Improving internationality in Savonia UAS

The author was intrigued to discover the means for improvement from the viewpoint of the members of Savonia UAS. Malinen stated that every degree programme should have an **international coordinator** who focuses entirely on international coordination, since at the moment the post is taken care of by teachers, who have enough responsibilities as it is. According to her, sufficient resourcing is vital for international functions. Malinen set an example from Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences, where the international

coordinator of Business Administration has five subordinates, such as international relations officers and secretaries. **Sufficient number of faculty** is the key to successful internationality, since as Asikainen said, internationality cannot be practiced alone.

Malinen suggested that there should be a **data bank** for those who work in internationality, faculty and students alike. As sometimes information does not reach all the participants and important messages get lost on the way, a data bank would be a solution. According to Malinen no one should have to “invent the wheel” if the necessary data could be available in the data bank. Venhovaara said that **evaluation** is the key to develop the international activities. The staff that work amidst internationality should be evaluated regularly and they should practice self-evaluation as well. Internationality needs coordination in order to ensure and control its quality. **Feedback** is also needed since it helps to develop the activities and that corrections can be made.

Asikainen said that the use of English should be encouraged, among the students and faculty alike. Kosunen suggested that maybe the staff could get English lessons to maintain their language skills and to learn more vocabulary and grammar. According to Kosunen, teacher and student counsellor Terttu Niskanen would give spectacular language lessons. Kosunen said that in international degree programs English should be always used, with no exceptions. He felt that the understanding of multiculturalism should be increased amongst staff, so that they would be aware why some nationalities learn differently than others. There should be more **international training** for the teachers, so that they could increase their skills and be more committed to internationality

Asikainen felt that the foreign degree and exchange students should be more included in the daily activities of Savonia UAS by making **Language Café** and **International Club** more common and established. Marketing would make these international activities more known and they should be included in the action plan. These activities should not be just arranged for a small number of foreign students, they should attract Finnish students to join as well. Kosunen said that collaboration with foreign schools should be encouraged more. Every year the business students of Savonia UAS organize the **Oivalla** fair together with the business students from NHL Hogeschool in Netherlands. Kosunen wished that this concept would be expanded into other countries and other projects as well. Malinen felt that the exchange students in Savonia UAS should be merged more with the locals, as exchange is about getting to know the locals and the new culture. Malinen called for **increased collaboration between Finnish and international tutors**, since it would increase the knowledge on cultures.

Kosunen said that extracurricular activities for the students would bring Savonia UAS great value. When Kosunen spent a semester in China in 2015, there were dozens of **clubs and extracurricular activities** arranged for the students after school. The activities would be cooking classes, sports or even medieval swordplay. The international students need activities to feel at home in Finland, since drinking and sitting around is not satisfying for most. Kosunen said that Savonia UAS could support these activities, financially or offering their premises to the use of students. He suggested that the students who would like to organize extracurricular activities could get credits for their efforts.

Future of internationality in Savonia UAS

The interviewees were asked to consider what kind of changes will internationality in Savonia UAS face in the future. Malinen said that Savonia UAS is hiring a **new International Affairs Executive**. The executive's tasks will be managing and developing the operative international activity and achieving internationality-related goals, developing the international networks and making cooperation agreements. According to Malinen, the person will be the new face of the international activity of Savonia UAS. The executive will create and develop international relations according to the strategic objectives. They will be responsible for collaborating with the Centre for International Mobility CIMO and act as an Erasmus coordinator. Malinen continued that a **new operating model and strategic policies** regarding internationality are under construction. She also mentioned that as academic fees will be introduced for non-EU students in 2017, Savonia UAS will need a **new marketing plan**.

Asikainen said that in the future Savonia UAS will emphasize the quality of the collaboration between foreign partnership universities, rather than the quantity. Asikainen also mentioned that internet and its possibilities will be utilized increasingly in the form of online courses, which are very common abroad. Asikainen said that Savonia UAS already has a few education packages which can be exported. These packages, or modules, are valuable deliverables which help to expand the operations of Savonia UAS.

Kosunen felt that the collaboration with universities in Asia seem to come to an end and the focus will be on European schools. He speculated that in the future most students in the International Business program will be Finnish, which is why Kosunen felt that a new marketing plan would be needed immediately. Kosunen also mentioned the plans for a new campus in Kuopio's Savilahti, where all Savonia's units in Kuopio would reside. According to Kosunen this would ease the collaboration between the degree programs. All international tutors of the programs could collaborate and organize activities and

events together. Kosunen wished that premises for a “tutoring room” would be arranged at the new campus. The room would be a working space for all tutors, Finnish and international.

International team

One of the most important aspects concerning the future internationality in Savonia UAS is the concept of “**international team**”, an idea generated by Asikainen. The action plan for the international team has not been established yet, but Asikainen was able to provide a general overview of the concept. According to Asikainen, there had long been discussion on how student union SAVOTTA could improve the international tutoring in Savonia UAS by uniting the international tutors from all degree programs. Asikainen said that the international correspondent of the student union must usually work alone with a little support, and the workload can be excessive.

International team, a group combined of active international students, would ease the work and increase efficiency and the quality of internationality and international tutoring. An idea of an international division of the student union was thus generated. Although details have not been confirmed yet, Asikainen said that the international correspondent of SAVOTTA would act as a team leader with the help from Asikainen himself, and the team would consist of international degree students who are interested in **international tutoring, international event planning** and internationality in general. International tutor trainings could also be developed and held by the international team.

Asikainen mentioned that the international team would have to collaborate closely with the international faculty of Savonia UAS, since international team would be a joint operation between the institution and the students. He wondered whether an **international team of faculty members** could be drafted as well, so that these two teams could cooperate efficiently. Of the operations of the possible international team Asikainen said that the activity could be event-planning, executing international tutor trainings, and most importantly planning, researching and developing the internationality in Savonia UAS. The work that the international team does would concern all the degree programs in Savonia UAS, not just the international degree programmes of International Business and Mechanical Engineering. International team would be lawfully a part of the operations of student union SAVOTTA, since it would be included in the action plan.

Malinen felt that activity and **collaboration between Savonia UAS and SAVOTTA** should be increased, since in other universities of applied sciences tutors are more included in the school's activities. Malinen said that the international tutors of Savonia UAS should not be left to their own devices, they should be included in the daily actions

and operations. Of the international team Malinen said positive, saying that international team would increase efficiency and the quality of international tutoring since all degree programs would have the same mechanism and procedures regarding the tutoring. On the other hand, Malinen was concerned whether separating the Finnish tutors from international tutors would be a good idea.

Kosunen felt that international team would be very beneficial for international tutoring. Kosunen said that since KuoTra ry and its tutors have many Finnish degree students to take care of, it would be more efficient if the international team would be in charge of the international students. According to Kosunen international team could organize events, increase group spirit and assist students in study-related problems. Kosunen strongly felt that the concept of international team should be utilized as soon as possible and action should be taken immediately. Kosunen concludes that the Finnish mentality is to ponder over issues for a long period and grasping an opportunity is seen as intimidating.

5.2 Benchmarking findings

Turku UAS

The main objective of the internationality in Turku UAS is to increase the students' and faculty's competence to operate in international and multicultural working life. Internationality is an essential part of all the functions of Turku UAS, such as the education, research, development and working life collaboration. The most central operations are **student mobility, domestic internationalization, staff mobility, international projects and education export**. (Turku University of Applied Sciences 2016). Härkönen, the Head of International Affairs said that in 2015 the international activity within Turku UAS was **decentralized**. Before the international functions were the responsibility of the international office, but the activity was dispersed to make internationality part of all activities, not an unattached, separate unit. According to Härkönen, decentralization was introduced to increase collaboration within the international functions. Härkönen said that if there would only be one organ in charge of internationality, the international matters would mainly stay just within the organ.

Härkönen continued that the success of internationality is not about the organization model, but the people behind the organization. In Turku UAS the international staff members take part for example in **education development, communication services, faculty services and student services**. There are four faculties which all have an international relations coordinator or an international relations officer. Each faculty has a

supervisor. According to Härkönen Turku UAS has an international team consisting of international personnel and a student representative. The team meets once a semester. Virtanen, a third-year information technology engineering student, has worked in internationality for one year as the International Affairs Correspondent of the student union TUO. Virtanen said that internationality is beneficial for the students, since it increases language skills and the competence to work with people from different backgrounds. He also mentioned that communication between the international services staff and internationally active students functions well.

Virtanen said that the main tasks of TUO regarding internationality are holding info sessions for the new exchange students and organizing international events. Although TUO is in charge of tutoring-related activities, international tutoring is organized by the student services of Turku UAS. International tutoring is very popular: every year there are one or two international tutors for one exchange student. International tutors arrange **transportation** for the exchange students when they arrive to Finland and organize **city tours** so that the foreign students get to know their new surroundings. Virtanen said that TUO arranges events called **TurkuGether**: the city of Turku funds the activity which for example includes visiting museums, and the events take place every two months. A **welcome party** for new foreign students is also arranged at the start of every semester.

Virtanen continued that the city of Turku funds an annual Christmas party for foreign students, and a project planner is always hired to organize the event. The aim is to give the foreign students the experience of Finnish Christmas, since many of them spend the Christmas in Finland rather than travel back home for the holidays. The use of the English language is also important: Virtanen said that TUO develops its English webpages often and it is ensured that information is available in two languages.

Of the factors behind the success of internationality in Turku UAS, Härkönen said that Turku UAS has a positive outlook on internationality and staff mobility is exercised regularly. Härkönen continued that the exchange students are very content with their studies in Turku UAS, which is proved by the feedback received via Erasmus+ Survey and oral and written feedback. The mobility statistics are favourable. Härkönen felt that the development of international matters has been positive. Virtanen said that in Turku UAS the international students are full members of the organization and they are included in the operations. According to Virtanen the majority of international students attend the same student events as the Finnish students. When asked which grade, on a scale of one to five, would Virtanen give to the internationality in their institution, he chose grade 4.

Hannukainen, the Head of International Relations said that the **partially-centralized, partially-decentralized** operating model of international functions, which has been the model since the founding of Metropolia UAS in 2008, works well in the institution. There is an international workgroup or a team within every degree program, and the members discuss internationality and develop international functions per the guidelines of the management group. The international coordinators of each degree programme participate in the operations of the teams. According to Hannukainen, the well-functioning operating model is behind the success of internationality within Metropolia UAS.

Internationality in Metropolia's business program, according to Nauska, a third-year European Management student and the International Business Correspondent of the business student association, consists of various aspects. Nauska said that many of the teachers are from a **multicultural background** and several come for example from England, Malesia and USA. She continued to say that the language teachers are all **native speakers**. Nauska said that the teachers are very professional and usually very active in internationality. The teachers in the International Business degree programme are behind the success of the institution's internationality, as they actively encourage students to participate in student mobility. Nauska said that teachers include the aspect of student mobility in their everyday speech, for example saying during the lessons: "As you will go abroad to study...", meaning that the topic is very present in teaching and it is talked about often during the lectures.

Nauska said that the teachers are encouraged to take part in faculty exchange and it is mandatory for the teachers to carry out one visiting lecture a year. Student mobility is also practiced actively, as there are almost 80 countries where a student can execute their exchange period. Nauska continued that alumni activity in Metropolia UAS is very effective, as alumni visit the school often to host lectures for the students. Nauska said that an annually organized "**workshop week**", during which the students collaborate on a joint project with the students of a foreign partner university, is also a part of the institution's internationality. Twice a year the international office and the student office host a "**study market**", which takes place in a visible place at campus hallways. They have a stand where they provide information on student mobility, present the exchange destinations and encourage the students to take part in an exchange period abroad.

When asked about international tutoring, Nauska said that the student union of Metropolia UAS Metka ry oversees training the tutors. There are two types of international tutors: degree student tutors and exchange tutors. In international degree programs, there are

usually three degree tutors and two head tutors per one group. In exchange tutoring the number of tutors is not limited: Nauska says that this semester there are 30 exchange tutors in the International Business program. The tutors' tasks are to be present during the orientation week and be very active during the first year. The exchange tutors transport the exchange student from the airport and collect their student apartment keys. The tutors are responsible for giving city tours for both degree and exchange students and to show them important facilities and services, such as the police station and magistrate.

Events and trips are also organized for the foreign students: previously they have visited for example the Fazer factory and Lapland. A **Christmas party** is also arranged annually. In degree tutoring the emphasis is on helping the students when their studies begin. The Finnish culture can come as a shock for some, so the degree tutors assist the students to adjust to Finnish studying methods and higher education institution setting. When asked which grade, on a scale of one to five, would Nauska give to the internationality in their institution, she chose grade 4

Jyväskylä UAS

In Jyväskylä UAS internationality is a vital part of the operations. It consists of international degree programs, international projects, development and research, international networks, student and staff mobility and ensuring an international learning environment for the students. The European Commission has acknowledged the international operations of Jyväskylä UAS with the Erasmus Golden Award for Excellence 2013. (Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences 2016).

According to Björn, the International Relations Manager, international services in Jyväskylä UAS were **centralized** in 2016. Before that the operating model had been more decentralized, but due to lack of staff the operations were concentrated and the name "international services" was established. Björn, having worked in internationality for two decades, said that since the new model is quite recent, learning the model needs practicing. The centralized model, according to Björn, has been useful since it was introduced to **discover new expertise, distribute the expertise and develop new viewpoints**. The international coordinators are not solely in charge anymore; now the responsibilities lie within the international services team and the right people can take care of matters in which they are most competent.

According to Björn, informing of international matters in Jyväskylä UAS is internal and external. The staff within the study fields have **meetings** and in some of them a student

representative of the student union JAMKO is present. The outgoing and incoming students have Facebook groups, where they are informed about mobility and exchange-related matters. Jyväskylä UAS also send a **bulletin** to partner institutions or organizations once or twice a year, including information on latest new or changes within Jyväskylä UAS. Holma, an International Business student and the International Tutoring Correspondent of student union JAMKO also said that a representative of JAMKO attends meetings that relate to international matters, and thus the flow of information is distributed evenly. The international services and the board of the student union, according to Holma, work as a **team**.

Björn said that the Finnish National Board of Education follows the situation of internationality in academic institutions through **statistics**. In Jyväskylä UAS, the statistics on the progress of students' studies and student and staff mobility have been very satisfactory. Björn and Holma said that Jyväskylä UAS has recently been very popular amongst exchange students. Björn said that Jyväskylä UAS must reserve a quota of student apartments from the student housing company KOAS to be able to arrange housing for all. According to Björn, there were 280 exchange students applying to study in Jyväskylä UAS the previous year, of which 60 to 70 will continue their studies during the spring semester. There will be about 100 new exchange students arriving for the spring semester as well. The reason behind such popularity, said Björn, is in the education export of Jyväskylä UAS.

When asked which grade, on a scale of one to five, would Holma give to the internationality in their institution, she chose grade 4. Holma said that international tutoring is one of the factors behind the success of internationality in Jyväskylä UAS. Björn concurred and mentioned that student union JAMKO is a crucial partner to the UAS. Björn said that internationality could not function well without the **international tutoring**, which is organized by JAMKO. JAMKO offers the possibility for the exchange students to rent out a Survival Kit, which according to Björn, is also important. Holma said that internationality in the student union consists of **international tutoring, organizing events and trips** and the **International Club**.

The aim of the International Club, abbreviated as JAMKO IC, is to arrange free-time activities, cultural experiences and events, and to unite the Finnish and foreign students at Jyväskylä UAS. They arrange international student parties twice a semester and "IC Burger Nights". Every semester JAMKO IC arranges a trip to an interesting destination, such as Saint Petersburg or Lapland. The language used during the trips is English. Although the language of the activities of JAMKO IC is English, it is intended that Finnish

students can join as well to experience the international environment. (Student Union of Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences JAMKO 2016).

Björn said that when the tuition fees for the student outside of EU are introduced next year, the situation needs to be assessed to find the appropriate action plan. Björn said that there are 500 foreign degree students in Jyväskylä UAS, of which 75% come outside of EU. To ensure that the flow of outside EU students does not subside entirely, Björn said that the needs of companies in the area should be surveyed. According to Björn, companies sometimes need expertise on certain market areas, such as Asia or Russia, and native students of those areas can offer the needed expertise. After surveying the needs of companies, the perspectives of business and working life in the area could to be included in the marketing of education to attract the students. Björn said that various means will be needed when starting to evaluate the ways in which students outside of EU can be attracted. Björn continued that the attractiveness of an academic institution is not enough, but to attract the student all aspects of life, for example the services, security and surroundings need to be in balance.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter the summary of the findings is constructed based on the data that is presented in the previous chapter. As the theme of the interviews within the members of Savonia UAS and the members of the benchmarked institutions centered around internationality, international functions and implementing internationality in an academic setting, the author could comprehend how internationality is organized and implemented in Savonia and discover the most prominent issues concerning the international functions. Utilizing benchmarking, the author could also comprehend how internationality in the other institutions is implemented. After the summary, improvements for the internationality in the International Business degree programme in Savonia UAS based on the interviews, benchmarking and the author's viewpoints are presented. Finally, the limitations and hindrances concerning this research are addressed.

6.1 Summary

The members of Savonia UAS described that internationality in Savonia UAS is a manifold composition of values, attitudes and functions. In general, internationality appeared as a **possibility to increase one's skills, capacities and independence**. The keywords were open-mindedness and acceptance, and even health benefits of internationality were mentioned. Interviewees agreed that internationality is a very valuable asset to Savonia UAS, which benefits the students and faculty alike. Internationality was stated to be crucial to Finland, since the domestic markets are quite small. The international functions in Savonia UAS that were mentioned most often were education export, projects, student and staff mobility, international students, international tutoring and collaboration with foreign partners.

The interviewees offered a wide range of issues they felt were the most compelling in the international functions of Savonia UAS. The **lack of marketing** was mentioned most often and that to improve internationality, Savonia UAS should take drastic action and rearrange their marketing plan. Many of the interviewees mentioned that because marketing is a crucial tool when attracting new students, Savonia UAS should create a new marketing plan to ensure the institution's vitality. The second most prominent issue according to the interviewees was the **disunity of the international functions**. The interviewees felt that at the moment internationality in Savonia UAS is shattered, since no general guideline for internationality exists. New **operating model** for international functions and coordination was demanded by many.

The general enthusiasm for internationality was often stated to be lost. Although all interviewees emphasized the importance of internationality, many felt that the spirit of internationality in Savonia UAS had been absent for some time. The **lack of the teachers' commitment to internationality in education** and **staff mobility** were mentioned. It was speculated whether the staff avoided the use of English in education because in Finland the use of English is often perceived as intimidating. Some felt that the guideline for the use of English in education or internal communication was hazy. **Lack of resources in international staff** and the **scarce amount of alumni activity** were also mentioned as one of the issues in internationality of Savonia UAS.

Many of the interviewees felt that in spite of its great importance, international tutoring does not receive the attention and appreciation it needs. Action should be taken to establish international tutoring as a notable and crucial part of the international functions in Savonia UAS. The most distinguished problems in internationality, according to some, were **lack of including the international tutors as full members of internationality** in Savonia UAS and **excluding the international tutors from tutoring activities**.

To resolve the issues in the internationality of Savonia UAS, the interviewees had various suggestions which were mostly aligned. Few mentioned the lack of international staff, feedback and coordination amidst the existing staff. As many felt that information does not always reach the right participants, a **data bank** of international matters was suggested. For the lack of using English in the institution, it was mentioned that the staff should be encouraged, perhaps in the form of English lessons and raising awareness of the importance of English. **Increasing international collaboration** with foreign schools was also mentioned to ensure the flow of prospective new foreign students.

The general opinion was that internationality should be increased and coordinated and its quality should be controlled. The most prominent changes in the future internationality in Savonia UAS mentioned by the interviewees were the hiring of a new International Affairs Manager, the plan for a new joint campus in Savilahti and the introduction of academic fees for outside-EU students in 2017. One of the most crucial ideas that came forth during the interviews was the plan for an international division within student union SAVOTTA, the **international team**. This was supported by those interviewees who were asked their opinion on the matter.

The benchmarked institutions all had a different operational model for international services, but both international managers and student union or association representatives felt that international functions and communicating in international matters

functioned well. The importance of bringing internationality as an **established part of the organization** was mentioned by many. In all the benchmarked institutions, the division of tasks seemed to be clear, coordinated and organized. The most important finding was that the international staff within every institution have **meetings**, where a student representative is present. This, according to interviewees, ensured a continuous and well-functioning flow of information to all participants in internationality, faculty and students alike. The name “international team” was mentioned in this context. The activity of teachers in internationality and staff mobility were mentioned as a part of successful internationality within the institutions.

In two of the institutions, there were no international correspondents within the board of business student association. Instead, the international correspondents were board members in the student unions, overseeing internationality in all degree programs. International tutoring was also divided in two institutions in degree tutoring and international tutoring. As the tasks of international tutors were similar to the tasks in all institutions, including Savonia UAS, organizing the tutoring activities within the institutions were more thought-provoking than the job descriptions of international tutors. In all benchmarked institutions, there were established, annual international events, such as a Christmas party for foreign students. It was mentioned that international tutors, as well as the foreign students, are an essential part of the organizations. TABLE 1 concludes the differences between Savonia UAS and the benchmarked institutions in regards of the operating model for international functions, international personnel and international tutors:

TABLE 1. Internationality’s operating model, international personnel and international tutors in the institutions

UAS	Savonia UAS	Turku UAS	Jyväskylä UAS	Metropolia UAS
Operating model for international functions	Decentralized	Decentralized	Centralized	Partially-centralized, partially decentralized
Number of international personnel	12	16	39	18

International tutoring arranged by	Student union SAVOTTA	Turku UAS	Student union JAMKO	Student union METKA
Separate tutors for degree and international tutoring	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of international tutors	Under 10	1-2 per one exchange student plus degree tutors	Not specified	5 degree tutors and 30 exchange tutors

6.2 Suggestions for improvement

As stated by Tim Stapenhurst, benchmarking is a method that is used when an organization wants to compare their performance with others and identify and adopt practices that would improve their performance (2009, 3). As discovered through benchmarking the institutions of Turku UAS, Metropolia UAS and Jyväskylä UAS, all the participant institutions practice a different operational model in their international functions. **Decentralized** model is practiced in Turku UAS, **centralized** model in Jyväskylä UAS and **partially-centralized, partially-decentralized** in Metropolia UAS. As all the student union or association representatives of these institutions gave the international functions in their UAS a grade 4 out of 5, a certain type of operational model seems not to be the sole key to success. The operational model must be constructed so that it corresponds to the needs of the organization. As mentioned by one of the interviewees, it is the people behind the operations that matter rather than the operational model.

The most crucial suggestion for improving internationality in Savonia UAS in the light of these research findings is reorganizing the international functions completely. As mentioned in most of the interviews amidst the members of Savonia UAS, **reorganizing** the international functions and **renewing** the operating model is crucial to develop the internationality in Savonia UAS and increase the institution's competence. As tuition fees for student outside of EU or the European Economic Area or introduced in fall 2017, drastic action needs to be taken in order to revive internationality in Savonia UAS and thus increase its appeal as a prospective educational institution for foreign students who are wondering which institution should they choose for their studies. This demands the

reformation of the international marketing plan. As Leppälä (2014, 33) says, development can proceed only through change. Change is vital for the continuity of life, in nature, economics and everything. Without change, there is no development or hope for the better. Policies and procedures need change, since the environment will change inevitably.

When the new international affairs manager is hired in Savonia UAS, the manager should develop a **general guideline** for international functions in collaboration with the management group, vice-principal, international coordinators, international services and student representatives. Internationality in Savonia UAS seems to lack rules. The guideline would naturally follow the guidelines of the management of Savonia UAS.. Thus, a guideline is crucial in order to connect all the staff and student participants who work in internationality within the institution. As in all benchmarked institutions, **international meetings** need to be established immediately. Flow of information and coherent internationality cannot be ensured without all the members of international functions receiving the information.

An **international team** as a division of student union SAVOTTA seems to like a good idea, but an actual opinion could only be formed after an action plan for the team is constructed. Changing international tutoring and international event planning solely to the responsibility of the student union seems reasonable, since as the author has worked as the International Affairs Correspondent of Kuopion Tradenomiopiskelijat ry for two years, it has become clear that KuoTra ry does not have the resources or the interest to fully commit to international tutoring and international activity in the International Business degree programme. If international matters were the responsibility of the student union, and students from all the degree programs of Savonia UAS would commit to the activity of the international team, international tutoring and event organizing would become more coherent and solid. International events should become as an official part of the action plan.

When collecting data from the benchmark institutions' websites, the author noticed that all institutions have a definite and clear page where the international services staff and their pictures are listed. Although Savonia UAS has a similar webpage on their website www.portal.savonia.fi/amk, the page could include the photos of the international services staff and other personnel relating to internationality. During three and a half years of studies in Savonia UAS, the author has noticed that information is sometimes somewhat difficult to find from the intranet Reppu. This has been mentioned by several students in the International Business degree programme, when they have tried to find information

for example on the Thesis, internship and exchange processes. **Pages concerning these functions should be renewed**, so that information would be listed clearly and that it could be found on a specific page. When the author performed their internship in 2015 in Malta, it took effort to try to find the information on documents and the general process, which for some reason was very confusingly partially available in Moodle and partially in Reppu.

The “**study market**” mentioned by Nauska from Metropolia UAS would be beneficial for Savonia UAS as well. During recent years there have been study-related stands hosted by the tutors. The author believes that the international office should host these stands, since they are the only ones who can provide sufficient amount information on studies and internship abroad. The study market could be marketed via email, Reppu and Facebook and charismatically invite the students to receive information on different services and possibilities. TABLE 2 presents the favourable practices in the benchmarked institutions, and based on these practices, suggestions for improvement which could enhance internationality in the International Business degree programme in Savonia UAS.

TABLE 2. Favorable practices and suggested improvements

Favorable practices in benchmarked institutions	Suggested improvements for Savonia UAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear vision and goals for internationality - Operating model which suits the organization - International team of international personnel and students - International tutoring regarded as an asset to institution's internationality - International tutoring arranged by a committed organ - Large number of international tutors, even 1-2 tutors per exchange student - International events and parties arranged continuously - Study market in Metropolia UAS, providing information on student exchange and internships abroad - Clear webpage for international staff including photos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New guideline for internationality, establishing rules and goals - New operating model to replace the old decentralized model - Establishing an international team, which meets at least once a semester - Including international tutors in meetings and decision-making - Removing international tutoring from KuoTra's responsibilities - Increasing the number of international tutors - Establishing international events in the action plan - Arranging a study market in Savonia UAS to encourage student and staff mobility - Reconstructing the international staff webpage

6.3 Limitations

The success of the research was ensured by using a vast number of appropriate sources and using ethical methods when collecting the data. *Descriptive validity*, meaning factual accuracy (Flick 2014, 485) in what was reported by the researcher, was fundamental for this research. When studying the field, the researcher ensured to report matters as she had seen and heard, guaranteeing that no statements were misheard or mistranscribed (Flick 2014, 485). It was important for the author of this thesis to succeed during the interviews by preparing the interview questions to suit the role and stance of the interviewee. Good quality of the interviews can be pursued by preparing the frame of the interviews carefully beforehand. In a focused interview one should also always remember the possibility of additional questions that form during the interview. (Hirsjärvi&Hurme 2011, 184).

Since the participants agreed to participate in this research using their own name, it was safe to assume that their answers were truthful and they allowed the researcher to harness their professional expertise and experiences. The author felt that showing the positions and titles of the interviewees gave the research more validity. It was ensured that the interview questions were open-ended and easy to answer, to avoid bringing the interviewees into a problematic situation if they did not know how to answer the questions. This way they could avoid providing mediocre or false information, which would affect them poorly in their institution. The interviews were executed exactly how they were initially designed. Apart from the additional questions that sprung during the interviews, there were no anomalies to the original design, even if this would have allowed the interviewees to seize the negative aspects of internationality in Savonia UAS more truthfully.

Executing interviews via Skype or phone caused limitations in the data collection phase, although Skype offers visuality whereas a telephone call offers none. In a telephone call, there are no visual clues, which would provide a context for the interviews (Hirsjärvi&Hurme 2011,64). Four of the eleven interviews were executed through a phone call, two via Skype. This was chosen as the method in these interviews, since six of the interviewees were either in Turku, Helsinki or Jyväskylä and travelling multiple times to these cities would have been excessive to the author. One of the interviews was rather short, since although the interviewee agreed for the interview, the business of the interviewee posed a limitation. The author would have also included a fourth institution in the benchmarking, but after agreeing for an interview, the person could not be reached anymore. Thus, only three institutions were included in the benchmarking.

To ensure that the telephone or Skype interviews went accordingly, the author secured a quiet working environment, internet connection, enough battery in the cellphone and tools for taking notes. Five of the six interviewees were approached by email before the phone calls or Skype sessions would take place. Three of the six interviews were arranged in a haste, since as the author's deadline for the thesis was approaching, the author was advised to contact three more people for the research in the benchmarked institutions to ensure that the research would be coherent and competent. Therefore, the author had to contact one of the interviewees by phone without arranging an agreed time for the interview first. Fortunately, the contacted person was eager to assist.

6.4 Conclusion

There was plenty of literature to be found about organizations and organization models, but literature on internationality in higher education institutions was scarce. The websites of Ministry of Education and Culture, CIMO Centre for International Mobility and Finnish National Board of Education provided valid data on the matter. There were no previous researches on how to use benchmarking when improving a function within a higher education institution, although reports on internationality could be found. The goal of this research was to discover what is internationality in Savonia UAS and in the benchmarked institutions, and thus find the means to improve internationality in the International Business degree programme of Savonia UAS.

The International Business degree programme was chosen because the author has studied International Business for three and a half years and worked as the International Affairs Correspondent of Kuopion Tradenomiopiskelijat ry and as an international tutor for almost three years, now when the thesis is completed. The topic of the research was important to the author because of these personal connections. From the experiences and suggestions of the Savonia UAS members and the benchmark participants in the cities of Turku, Helsinki and Jyväskylä, the means for improving the internationality in Savonia UAS were received. The research questions were as follows:

- How is internationality organized and implemented in Savonia UAS?
- How is internationality organized and implemented in those universities of applied sciences who have the most well-functioning internationality?
- How could internationality in the International Business degree programme of Savonia UAS be improved?

As the subject of this research was given to the author by Virpi Oksanen, the international coordinator in the Business Administration program, it was clear to the author that a certain kind of problem in internationality existed. Studying in an international degree programme herself and having been a part of international tutoring and international relations in the International Business degree programme, the author had noticed a need for a change and new practices as well. The two first questions were answered by using data from the institutions' websites and more importantly, the data provided by the interviewees. The members of Savonia UAS could provide an all-encompassing and a multilayered image of what internationality in Savonia UAS really is. The second question was answered by the interviewees in the benchmarked institutions offering numerous examples on how international functions are organized within their institutions.

This resulted in being able to answer the third and most crucial question: *how could internationality in the International Business degree programme of Savonia UAS be improved?* The members of Savonia UAS provided an arrange of suggestions, which were apt, necessary and executable. The experiences and accounts from the benchmark participants supported these suggestions, such as the international team in ensuring the flow of information for every participant in internationality, fixed international events which take place every year and that there is no *perfect* operational model for internationality within a university of applied sciences, it is how the members *communicate* and that there is a *guideline* which ensures the framework for internationality. The new international affairs manager should be in charge of establishing an international team within every degree programme and developing a guideline to ensure that international functions can be rebuilt to be coherent throughout the organization.

The author had a theory that the research questions could be answered trough data collection implemented via theoretical literature and interviews. This occurred when transcribing and analyzing the data from the interviews, which was supported by findings from literature. The author was very content of the findings acquired from the interviews with the members of Savonia UAS, since they, as the members of the organization, could provide a view, a window into the issues which complicate internationality in Savonia UAS, and provide valuable suggestions on how to improve internationality. It was expected that the benchmarked organizations would function somewhat similarly, but important differences were also detected since every organization has its own way of functioning and practices have formed through time.

To conclude, the author believes that the research answered the three research questions and that the findings were valid, since the information was provided by professionals in

the institutions of Savonia UAS, Turku UAS, Metropolia UAS and Jyväskylä UAS. There could have been more insight if all the benchmark participants would have been able to fully participate in the interviews and answering all the questions, with no time limitations. As the method in the thesis was qualitative research, it needs to be noted that that the answers to the research questions, especially to the third one, were only suggestive.

Additionally, although the author is a student member in the organization of Savonia UAS, more profound research could be made by Savonia UAS itself. This could also be done by a third-party researcher, but it would be beneficial that the research could be done by the organization itself to make actual changes to international functions and working methods. This research could have also been conducted by combining the qualitative and quantitative methods in order to gain data from a larger group of students and personnel in Savonia UAS. The author hopes that the choice of the interviewees in Savonia UAS provided a comprehensive, professional outlook on internationality within the institution.

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APPENDIX ONE

Interview 1

Juha Asikainen, Executive Director of Student Union SAVOTTA

1. What is internationality in Savonia UAS?
2. What significance does internationality in Savonia UAS have?
3. What are the most important characteristics of internationality in Savonia UAS?
4. What has been successful in the internationality of Savonia UAS?
5. What should be developed more?
6. What wishes do you have about internationality from the students' point of view and the faculty's point of view?
7. What kind of improvements would you suggest to internationality of Savonia UAS?
8. What kind of thoughts do you have about the future of international matters of Savonia UAS?
9. What kind of resources should be available?
10. What solutions would you offer to develop the internationality in Savonia UAS?
11. How did the idea of "International team" come to life?
12. Who will be a part of it? How will it be organized?
13. What will the functions be?
14. How will it be funded?
15. How will the activity be monitored?

APPENDIX TWO

Interview 2

Marina Malinen, International Relations Coordinator

1. What is your role in the internationality of Savonia UAS?
2. What does internationality of Savonia UAS consist of?
3. What are the most important characteristics in the internationality of Savonia UAS?
4. What significance does the internationality of Savonia UAS have for the students and the faculty?
5. How are the international matters of Savonia UAS charted, researched and developed?
6. What has been successful in the internationality of Savonia UAS?
7. What would be the ideal internationality?
8. Describe the internationality of Savonia UAS in three words.
9. What has not succeeded in the internationality of Savonia UAS?
10. Which area needs most development?
11. What should be done in order to reach an idealistic level of internationality?
12. What improvements would you suggest?
13. What wishes do you have about internationality from the students' point of view and the faculty's point of view?
14. What changes will the internationality of Savonia UAS face in the following years?
15. Which matters need attention?
16. What kind of resources should be available to internationality?
17. About the "International team", an idea generated by Juha Asikainen. Any thoughts, opinions or suggestions?

APPENDIX THREE

Interview 3

Petteri Alanko, Communications Manager

Pirjo Venhovaara, Student Counselling Coordinator

1. What are the most problematic issues concerning the internationality of Savonia UAS?
2. What kind of improvements would you suggest?

APPENDIX FOUR

Interview 4

Niko Kosunen, 4th year International Business student

1. What is internationality in Savonia UAS?
2. What significance does internationality in Savonia UAS have?
3. What are the most important characteristics of internationality in Savonia UAS?
4. What has been successful in the internationality of Savonia UAS?
5. What has not been successful about the internationality of Savonia UAS?
6. What should be developed more?
7. What wishes do you have about internationality from the students' point of view and the faculty's point of view?
8. What kind of improvements would you suggest to internationality of Savonia UAS?
9. What changes will the internationality of Savonia UAS face in the following years?
10. On what issues Savonia UAS should focus?
11. What kind of resources should be available to internationality?
12. About the "International team", an idea generated by Juha Asikainen. Any thoughts, opinions or suggestions?

APPENDIX FIVE

Interview 5

Student union/student association representatives of Turku UAS, Metropolia UAS and Jyväskylä UAS

1. What do you study and how long have you been active in your institution's international functions?
2. What does the internationality in your institution consist of?
3. What importance does internationality have for students?
4. In what ways has your institutions succeeded in international matters?
5. What grade (1-5) would you give to your institution's international functions?
6. What kind and how much of faculty works in international functions?
7. Is there a sufficient amount of faculty?
8. Do foreign students get service in English in the student office?
9. How many students work in internationality in your institution?
10. Does communication function well between the internationality faculty and the active students?
11. Is there a sufficient amount of students who work in internationality?
12. Have you participated in an exchange program?
13. Is studying abroad common amongst the students in your institution?
14. Is the exchange process easy to execute?
15. What grade (1-5) would you give to the exchange process?
16. What is international tutoring in your institution?
17. How many international tutors are there?
18. How many tutor trainings do the tutors have?
19. Is there a sufficient amount of international tutors?
20. How many exchange students are there usually, from which countries are they from?
21. What kind of services do the international tutors offer to exchange students?
23. How many English-spoken degree programs are in your institution?
24. From which countries do the foreign degree students usually come from?
25. What kind of services do the international tutors offer to foreign degree students?
26. What kind of international events are there in your institution?
27. Do the English webpages of your institution function well?
28. How will the internationality of your institution change during the following years?
29. What would you improve in your institution's international functions?

APPENDIX SIX

Interview 6

International Managers of Turku UAS, Metropolia UAS and Jyväskylä UAS

1. How are international functions organized in your institution?
2. Do you believe that the operational model of the international functions in your institution functions well, why?
3. How do you communicate with the staff and students who work in internationality?
4. How have the international functions in your institution succeeded?
5. In fall 2017 tuition fees are introduced for outside EU students. How could it be ensured that the flow of foreign students does not decrease?

